
OUR MAJOR.

BY A CORPORAL OF COMPANY Q.

"THANK you, me boy, I don't care if I do," said Major Jack, as he deposited his short dumpy person in the only chair that adorned the tent of Lieutenant Bob; "and," continued he, "if I ever drink it's about this time o' day."

The information contained in the latter portion of the major's remark had somehow lost the savor of freshness to Lieutenant Bob, because of its frequent repetition by the major at all times of the day. It may thus appear that Major Jack wasn't exactly a temperance lecturer, for whatever his sentiments on the subject of temperance may have been, his practice conformed more closely to that of the traditional "horrid example." Yet it may be supposed, from the form and apparent cordiality of the worthy officer's remark, that it was made in response to an equally cordial invitation to "take a smile;" but it wasn't. It was only a little way adopted by the hero to increase his popularity among his subordinates, and at the same time to prompt the aforesaid invitation. I am afraid Major Jack was, in the classic language of Camp Houston, a "dead beat." At least he bore that reputation, either justly or unjustly, in the camp of the 980th.

The hot afternoon sun beat down upon the canvas roofs of the camp, and its rays glistened and glanced across the water of the bay, while the cool sea-breeze stirred the leaves of the live oaks overhead and played refreshingly through the open sides of the tent.

Lieutenant Bob lay stretched at full length on his "bunk," without any martial cloak wrapped round him, taking his *otium cum dig.* in a manner which few could equal and none excel.

Out on the bay the two "tin clads" swung lazily with the changing tide, and across the water, from the further shore, came the rattat-tat of the garrison drummers at their afternoon practice under the spreading magnolias on the bank.

At the sound of the major's voice, Lieutenant Bob slowly raised himself upon his elbow, glanced at his superior officer, with a sigh of regret, pointed to the demijohn standing by the centre pole at the back of the tent, and then relapsed into his former position. With a peculiar twist of wrist and elbow, invented by himself, and of which he was immensely proud, the major raised the demijohn to the altitude of his mouth, glanced at the recumbent lieutenant and, with his customary toast, "ere's to my worshipful self," proceeded to imbibe deliberately and at length. This being about the tenth time for the day that he had proposed his little toast, and made his little response, he felt fatigued, and with a grunt (whether of satisfaction or regret that he could hold no more I cannot truthfully say), he fell back upon his base of attack, the chair, overcome by his emotions. Lulled by the cooling zephyrs and the drowsy sounds without he fell asleep.

"*Requiescat in pace,*" muttered fat Captain P. (whose "well of Latin undefiled" flowed upon the slightest provocation), as he sauntered by, on his way to set up some "profiles" for the earthworks, with "*fidus achates,*" the little brown meerschaum, between his teeth. From the cogitative look upon his usually smooth and placid brow, it was plain that Captain P. was trying to conjecture the probable fate of his fourteenth resignation, but that morning started on its circumlocu-

tory journey through the "official channels," when his attention was arrested by sight of the sleeping major and his classic remark called forth.

As the sun descended towards his jumping-off place behind the cypress swamps the major snoozed peacefully on, his arms hanging loosely by his side, his head fallen forward on the breast of his uniform coat, which was stained and faded and decidedly shabby, while of the straps that adorned his shoulders, one was minus a golden leaf, the other fallen forward like his head, hung by a feeble attachment to the coat, both together a faithful index of the major's character.

"You're a nice looking major," thought Lieutenant Bob, as he eyed him with a half dreamy look of disgust.

But the hours passed on, and the major awoke when the shadows of the "forest primeval" had lengthened far out over camp and bay, and the drummers' call for "dress parade" rattled and clattered out on the parade ground.

All these stirring events happened during "the late unpleasantness," and at that particular time which it may best suit the reader's convenience to imagine.

The evening shadows have fallen upon the camp of the 980th; the night detail has gone to the picket line under command of Lieutenant Bob, growling as he went, over his "cursed luck;" "Retreat" has passed and "Tattoo" and "Taps" are yet to come.

The usual evening conclave has assembled at headquarters, where at his desk mid files of "general orders," "rosters," "cigar stubs," "old soldiers," and brier-wood pipes, Adjutant Mike reigns supreme, and where the officers were wont to spend the evening hour in discussing the momentous question thus tersely propounded by "our Br-e-own," "I'd like to kn-e-ow when we're goin' to stop this 'ere mud-diggin' an' see some fitin'."

Here with the rest comes Major Jack, refreshed by his slumber, his tongue loosened by sundry further applications of "commis-sary" to the roots thereof, and himself ready to become the centre of interest because of the marvellous "yarns" he is wont to spin.

"I say, fellows, did I ever repeat that famous poem of 'Abu Ben Hassan?' My fa—"

"Abel Ben Hasheater be blowed," growled Captain Goodhofs, who had no ear for poetry, but whose "best hold" was logic of the knock-down and drag-out variety, learned by long experience on a "Liverpool liner."

Adjutant Mike groaned in spirit, and swore Spanish oaths under his breath till the air was blue, as he saw the major coolly plant his cavalry boots (No. 9s) on the desk right on top of the latest "general orders." But the major was primed and not to be "bluffed" by Liverpool "liners," nor yet by Peruvian quartermasters.

But the shade of Abu Ben Hassan has flitted back to his desert home, for the major begins the oft repeated story of his life, so often repeated that he really believes it himself.

His auditors listened, I think, more out of curiosity to detect variations, than from any interest or belief in the yarns themselves.

So, brierwood in mouth and glass in hand, he discoursed of rich but honest parents, of a thorny pursuit of knowledge under the great Horace Boyy at Aleppo College, of expulsion for good behaviour, of daily labor for years mid clanging anvils and massive machinery, of a life on the ocean wave in navy blue, of cruises here and there, of Shanghai and St. Helena—now a civilian on the gold coast, one day rich, the next a coal heaver on the docks—of duels with swords, and duels with pistols, of promotion from the ranks for conspicuous bravery at Big Bethel—(here the audience smiled audibly, all but little Peach-ton, fresh from Yankee land, whose eager eyes and open mouth betokened his interest and belief, while the sable Ganymede, George Washington Caesar, hastened to the sutler's with the empty bottles). At last he wound up with the account of his terrific encounter with garroters at St. Louis, when "I just went right down in my boots, and, holy Moses, you ought to see them fellers git."

Adjutant Mike groaned pensively a second time as the inkstand capsized under the major's enthusiastic boots.

Of course each epoch of the hero's life had occupied weeks, months or years as best suited his convenience in its narration.

When the customary applause had subsided Colonel G. quietly remarked:

"How old are you, major?"

"Why (slightly surprised at such a question), I'm about twenty-seven."

"Indeed you're not, from your own account you are precisely one hundred and nineteen years of age;" and the colonel verified the statement by exhibiting to the delighted company a pencilled minute of the different periods of time which, according to the major each of his adventures had occu-

pled and the footing corroborated the colonel.

And then such a shout arose, and peal after peal of laughter shook the crazy shanty, till the sergeant of the ward came on the double quick to learn the cause of the alarm and to beg the officers not to awake the "officer of the day," while the, for once, discomfited major disconsolately "mizzled."

But Major Jack was a philosopher and prided himself upon his philosophy, although candor compels me to say that it was about equally compounded of Emerson and "commissary."

As the last stroke of "taps" died away on the air and the lights went out in the quarters, as Major Jack crept thus unusually early to his tent, an attentive listener might have heard him mutter, with many a hic-cup, something about the "compensations of calamity being made manifest after many days."

The night wears on, the stars shine down clear and bright, while the half hour strokes of the gunboat bells and the calls of the watch, "Starboard, all's well!" "Port, all's well!" come echoing over the waters. In camp all are sleeping, save the sentinels pacing their silent rounds, and the "officer of the day" just rubbing his eyes, and snarling at the unlucky "orderly" who has waked him to make the "grand rounds."

But hark! a rifle shot rings out on the picket line, and another, and another, and now the "long roll" wakes the startled sleepers with its fearfully dismal cadence. With hasty buckling of belts and nervous grasping of muskets, the lines are formed and the earth works manned. The brass "Napoleons" at the angles join in the terrible din of war's alarm, while the shells from the gunboats describe their fiery curves through the midnight sky, and burst far over in the distance, where horsemen in gray are riding down the pickets. "Brown" is at the angle sighting the "Napoleon," and yelling for "a leetle more pe-owder," but where or how is our valorous major? At the first roll of the drums the major awoke, and instantly "went right down in his boots," and, seizing his sabre, rushed forth. Suddenly he bethought him the sabre was dull, and so, while the rifles were ringing and the shells were shrieking, Major Jack, away at the rear by the quartermaster's forge, was fiercely grinding that sabre, while the ever faithful George W. Caesar turned the grindstone. Lieutenant

Bob comes riding furiously in from the picket line for reinforcements, but before the detail can be made "Baillie" retires with his gray guerrillas, the gunboats cease shelling the swamps, and the companies go to quarters, just as the major reaches the angle in time to order last solid shot to be cut "six seconds." The night attack is over.

Once more quiet broods over the wide Chefuncta, and the darkness is unbroken save by the twinkling stars, and the dull glow of Lieutenant Bob's brierwood as he wends his equestrian way back to the "reserve."

Months pass on, the 980th is moved here and there by the caprice of the commanding general and the exigencies of the service, and once more pitches its tents by the shore of Chefuncta Bay. Major Jack has made a brief but eloquent speech of "not guilty" before a court-martial, and in the words of a general order has been returned to our midst, there to learn, during a six months' probation, how "to form new and better purposes in life."

But the wisdom of courts-martial, like the justice of juries, is almost proverbial, and so of course the sentence was disapproved, and the major gave up his plans for his probation. When the whirligig of time had rolled a few more weeks into eternity, the fortunes of war found Major Jack our commanding officer. There is an old saying which, I remember, fat Captain P. would sometimes quote, in his indignant moods, when Lieutenant Bob confidently believed him to be profane, "*Fiat justitia ruat coelum.*" So shall it be for our major. A change came over him surprising to all, but a reform too sudden, it almost seemed, to be permanent.

For four short weeks our major was a soldier, and an officer in fact as well as in name, and then, whatever respect his "new and better purposes" had begun to inspire, was broken by the order announcing his discharge. The sword so long suspended by a hair had fallen, and closed forever was the military career of our major.

So one bright spring morning when white-winged rumors of peace had begun to fly from the far north, our Jack, alas, no more "our major!" disappeared from our midst with the morning's dew, regretted by few save the sorrowful sutler and the trusting Teuton eyeing disconsolately his long-chalked score for lager. Another year flew by and no news came to our ears from citizen Jack.

The war was over, and comrades, so long united by the ties of a common patriotism, a

common danger and a common duty, separated forever.

For the last time arms were stacked, the last drummer's call was beaten, the last roll called, and the 980th ceased to be a unit in the army of liberty.

Far away in a northern city, at the close of a long fierce summer's day, in the quiet ward

of a great public hospital, with no friend near to cheer his last moments, "our major" lay dying. With naught but the record of wasted years and wasted talents behind him, he passed to that undiscovered country, where, let us hope, his faults and his follies shall be remembered no more against him forever.

OUR NEW PUPIL

HESTER BITTERSWEET

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OUR NEW PUPIL.

BY HESTER BITTERSWEET.

It was the spring of 1858. I was head teacher in Professor Button's day and boarding-school for young ladies, an institution distant not a thousand miles from Chicago.

Our retiring bell, which always sounded at ten, had just stopped ringing. The mistress was on her customary round through the halls, giving the order of the hour, "Lights out! Lights out, young ladies!" when Barbara the chamber-maid stopped at my door, with the message that I was wanted down stairs in the Green Parlor.

It was poor little Mrs. Professor who wanted me, of course. She was always having one or another of the teachers down in

the Green Parlor to quiz and cross-question, to *pump*, that is, in plain English.

I was vexed certainly. Those long vulgar gossips I detested upon general principle. Besides, at the moment, I particularly disliked being called away from my work.

I could not leave, of course, until I had established some sort of quiet in my range of halls. I waited, therefore, till Barbara had gathered up the dormitory lamps and carried them away, and till the girls had stopped blowing kisses through the key-holes of their doors and shouting good-nights and all manner of affectionate nonsense to each other from their beds in the different rooms.

At last, in no very amiable temper, I am afraid, I went down stairs; but not till I had slipped a budget of compositions and an unread letter from John into my pocket.

John, by the way, is my twin brother, and a great favorite of mine, though he is deaf and dumb, too, poor fellow! He has nothing more to do with my story, however.

I found a lighted lamp standing on a bracket just outside the Green Parlor door. I stopped there to correct a composition or two. You see, all I could accomplish before going in, would have so much the less to be fagged through on coming out.

The parlor door swung open a bit; Barbara had probably left it unlatched on her way up stairs. Within, Mrs. Professor sat lolling on an easy-chair before the grate. She was never warm, this little woman; but that is neither here nor there.

There were two other persons in the room, a man and a woman, both strangers. They seemed to be waiting for some one. It was for myself, as I learned upon entering. The woman was—well, she was, at a first glance, precisely nothing in particular; like a good many of the rest of us. She was, for instance, not tall, nor short, nor slender, nor stout; not very young, not at all old; and neither a blonde nor a brunette, nor yet a fright nor a beauty. She had fishy eyes; you could not look through them into her intellectual movements and her impulses. This I observed at once.

Further, the lady was dressed in the deepest of mourning. She was, on the whole, got up unexceptionably enough, but in a style somewhat inclining to the rural. "Steady and strong, but crude," said I to myself concerning her.

The lady's attendant was a dark, compact, muscular-looking man, with a hard square face and massive features. His forehead was specially noticeable. It was high enough, and very wide, but retreating; being particularly prominent just over the eyes, where phrenologists place the perceptive. The countenance of the man was an intellectual, but, on the whole, not an altogether agreeable one somehow. As John used to say, "It had one expression too many."

Mrs. Professor Button addressed this person as doctor. He was rather undisguisedly oldish, I remarked. I fancied he might incline to a parade of his years, from professional motives. At any rate the doctor carried a gold-headed cane. He wore a wig.

It was a bushy one, of a sandy color, and it quite covered the upper portion of his side-face. He had on green spectacles with side-glasses and gold rims. He was so bewhiskered that I could not obtain a clear view of his face.

The girl, or the woman, or whatever she was, turned presently to a quantity of company-traps laid out on a table near her, and began to look them over. Directly she chanced upon a daguerreotype of myself. I knew it by the case, you observe. Looking at it a moment with a suppressed show of interest, she slyly passed it to the doctor for inspection. At the same time with the fingers of her disengaged hand she stealthily spelled out in the mute alphabet "*see serpent*," meaning thereby me, Hester Bittersweet.

The doctor on his part, appeared not to see altogether so well as one would expect, through those gold-rimmed, double-glassed spectacles of his. He turned the picture about nervously in a variety of lights, as if to obtain a better view of it. At last, seizing an opportunity when Mrs. Professor had turned her back for a moment, he furtively shoved up his glasses and took a square look underneath them.

To my unbounded astonishment, the gentleman telegraphed back again:

"The Bittersweet! Look out for her," he added.

"Soon serve her out!" replied the young lady, coolly, in the same manner; and she accented the pantomime of winding an imaginary Bittersweet around her little finger.

The doctor tapped his forehead significantly.

"No you don't! Too many brains."

"Take her into confidence!" he pursued, reflectively, after a moment's thought.

"Not!" answered the woman. "She'd blab. A woman always will. Too deuced orthodox! She'd kick us out of this here, quicker'n chain lightning—she would."

The above *mute* dialogue, carried on by persons to whom I was myself a total stranger, impressed me as rather a piquant affair, on the whole. In fact it roused my feminine curiosity to the highest pitch. However, I'm not a sneak—at least, I don't think I'm a sneak, though if anything in the world will make a woman such, or a man either, for that matter, it is teaching a term of years, in a day and boarding-school for young ladies. I did not wait, therefore to observe further; but, executing a hypocritical little feint upon the door-knob, I walked in,

The couple in question, turned out to be a certain Doctor John S. Smith of Illinois Centre, and his sister Mary Ann, our pupil who was to be.

The doctor was exceedingly civil; apologized for the lateness of his visit; was compelled by professional business, a case of amputation, in fact, to return home by the next train; wished to make immediate arrangements for Mary Ann's tuition.

"Was she to pursue a full course of study with us?" I asked.

"O yes; a full course, certainly."

Finally, "would I sound Mary Ann," the doctor wanted to know, "and ascertain her proper place in the classes?"

With the greatest pleasure in life.

Decidedly, however, Mary Ann was averse to being sounded, as at once appeared. Generally, I can give as good a guess at a girl as another. Not, however, when like this one, she deliberately puts herself up in a brown paper parcel, *figuratively speaking*. On the whole, I could make nothing of her, but a female x for future elimination.

I assigned Mary Ann a place in the classes, notwithstanding, and selected her school-books. The doctor paid for them; settled her bill for half the term in advance, according to our regulations; and chose her room. It was on the second floor front; and opened not into the hall like the other dormitories of that range, but into an outer passage which led down to the front door of our wing. The apartment was small, and it was fixed that the girl should have no roommate. The doctor was very particular on this—and kindred points—very.

"In consideration of her health, you know," said he.

Mariannie—for so in true schoolgirl style she directly commenced to give out her name—Mariannie soon settled into the usual routine of school life. Personally, I abhorred the creature. The pupils, for the most part, disliked her cordially. They talked of her in their crude way as *too awful perfect*, and called her *B. B. G.* (Button's Body Guard). This behind her back always, for really they stood in wholesome awe of her strong practical common sense.

My suspicions concerning the girl early assumed definite form, but as little Mrs. Professor was at once an inveterate tattler, and the very quintessence of stupidity itself, I resolved to keep my own counsel and await future developments.

Mariannie seemed, at first, in a fair way to baffle me. She never did anything wrong; or, at least, if she did, she managed not to be caught at it. At table, by example, she never called for a second cup of tea or coffee or whatever it might be; you couldn't always tell by the taste. She never took too much butter to her buckwheats. She never took too much sauce to her pudding. She never applied for a second edition of any of the standard tea-table luxuries. She never stayed away from the weekly prayer meetings, religiously going, and what was more to the purpose, returning under the protecting wing of Professor Button.

On every Friday afternoon her standing was regularly read off to the school in tens—ten being our *ne plus ultra*. Mortal man could ask no more. Of course we were charmed with her.

"That Miss Smith of ours is *such* a treasure! and O, so useful," was Mrs. Professor's unvarying compliment.

To do Mariannie justice, she had a way of slipping into the Green Parlor of an evening, and making herself generally available. She was remarkably neat-handed. Whatever she touched fell immediately by some *hocuus pocus* or another, into desirable shape. For instance, she trimmed hats and collars beautifully, and created perfect loves of bows out of odds and ends of condemned ribbon. All of which did not reconcile me to her in the least.

I was waiting for breakfast one morning, jaded with overwork, and stupid proportionally. There was a good deal of chattering going on in my hall, which I did not particularly care to notice. The morning was chilly, and the girls were huddled together in groups about the hall, some studying and others immersed, heart and soul, in a morning gossip.

As I was sitting idly at the window, watching the weather, which happened to be particularly gray and gloomy, and sidgiting for the breakfast bell to ring I caught sight of something like a human figure gliding stealthily along on the other side of the paling by which the school-grounds were set off from the public street.

I said to myself, "it is Jeff Humphrey," Jeff Humphrey being sixteen, and distracted lover to one of the girls in my hall. A moment afterwards, I caught sight of the same figure passing a spot where two or three boards happened to be missing from the fence.

It was not Jeff at all; but only a little old woman, hobbling along on a cane, with a pitcher of something in her hand, and with the skirt of her gown drawn over her head and huddled together under her chin.

I pitied the poor old creature. She looked thoroughly miserable; lame, crooked, wan and with her wretched tattered petticoats fluttering about her in the keen morning air. I had never seen her before, though I knew most people in our neighborhood, and I could not make out where she went to.

Still the girls in the hall kept up their chattering.

"False teeth! O my!" shrieked No. 10.

"La yes!" replied our parlor boarder, Miss Larkspur.

"Different sets, eh?"

"La, yes, to be sure! One of them was snags."

"Snags?" repeated No. 10.

"Yes, *snags*! Like an old woman's mouth, you know. Here one and there another, yellow as the 'gold of Ophir.'"

"Really, now?"

"La yes! Hope to drop dead and bone!" pursued Miss Larkspur, by way of solemn asseveration.

Miss Larkspur, I may as well mention, was our school gossip. She had a talent for rapid but superficial observation, and was far more apt at ferreting out and reporting facts than at making original deductions from them.

"There was a lot of old wigs in there, too," continued the Larkspur.

"O the wicked, wicked creature!" shrieked pretty witty little Miss Mixer.

Here conversation floated into an eddy of general hubbub. Talking and laughing went on for a while *ad libitum*.

"What sort?" asked some logical body, by-and-by, again. I believe it was Carry Poser.

"I don't half know, I'm sure," returned Larkspur. "How should I, being in such a hurry? Stay though! One was a gray false front, for an old woman."

"Dear me! Yes, of course! That went with the teeth, I suppose."

"There was a man's wig there, too," resumed Miss Larkspur, warming with her subject. "It had whiskers, and eyebrows and all. And a darkey's wig," she went on, "with the wool projecting to the cardinal and ordinal points of the compass."

A question finally arose as to how the con-

tents of Mariannie's box had been ascertained, and was pursued with vehemence by Carry Poser.

On this point Miss Larkspur was not disposed to be communicative.

"La now, Poser, none of your business," was her ultimatum.

"What is it?" piped a shrill voice, just then, from the door of No. 5.

The speaker was a young girl who had contracted the nickname of *Dim Dark Distance*, from an unfortunate flight of fancy in one of her school essays.

"It's B. B. G.'s box," answered somebody.

"B. B. G. has been and reported me to the Buttons," exclaimed Dim Dark, "and so there! It's all because Jeff Humphrey serenades me now and then of an evening."

"La!" cried Larkspur, "if that isn't what Dim Dark has been in sackcloth and ashes about this ever so long! Don't you mind, though, child."

"But I do mind!" persisted the other. "Here I've been and studied my algebra thirteen times over, and don't know a thing."

"Don't know a thing?" echoed Miss Mixer. "Goodness gracious! That's nothing new."

"In my opinion the creature is an actress," continued the Larkspur, pursuing the thread of her thoughts, through the above tangle of small talk.

"In my opinion she's a murderess and a horrid old hag and no less," said the aggrieved Dim Dark.

"Or a witch," suggested No. 10.

"The witch of End (do) or," remarked Miss Mixer.

The Mixer was enthusiastically encored. The girls had a fashion that term of pelting genius with impromptu imitation-bouquets done in twisted paper.

I heard a shower of these missiles flying about the hall for some time. Then a voice called out:

"Where is B. B. G.?"

That was what nobody seemed to know. Mariannie had not been seen that morning it appeared. She was not in the study room, her usual place at that hour, and, indeed, at all hours not devoted to prescribed duties. She was not in her own room.

The girls began peeping about for her in one spot and another. They could not find her. They searched the building from garret to cellar thoroughly. Finally, communicating their anxiety to the family, and joined by the whole household, servants, teachers and

proprietors, they extended their investigation to the adjoining grounds, but quite without success.

Mrs. Professor would never allow a boarding-pupil to leave the school-grounds without her own special permission. This gave importance to the fact of Mariannie's disappearance.

The box under discussion that morning, was standing in a little closet at the foot of Mariannie's bed. You would call it rather a square trunk than a box. It was a heavy clumsy affair, and was fastened by a large odd-looking lock of peculiar construction.

This trunk was full of disguises, according to Larkspur, who, to be sure, was not the best of authority. I felt, however, that she was not in error here. Perhaps Mariannie was out masquerading at that very moment, in an old woman's wig, etc., for instance. Nobody could say she was not, certainly.

As the key was not in the lock of the trunk, I, of course, forbore investigation in that direction. Looking sharply about me, however, I discovered that a certain small earthen pitcher usually on duty in the apartment, was not in its accustomed place, and indeed was not to be found elsewhere.

I forthwith instituted proceedings which I need not here detail. Suffice it to say, I eventually discovered our charming Miss Smith snuggled away in a narrow lane back of the Button premises. She was got up *à la* old woman, and was the veritable shambling wretch whom I had observed and pitied a while before.

The girl was stepping out of her disguises when she met my eyes.

"Good-morning!" said I.

"Good-morning!" she returned, stoutly.

"A lovely morning for a promenade," I continued, with a wicked glance at her dripping clothing; for by this time it was raining with a will.

Mariannie set her firm-looking teeth hard together, and looked me over with a sort of baffled stare which I could not readily translate.

"You are making a great mistake for once in your life," muttered the creature, half aloud.

Not particularly caring to commit myself, I executed a detestable little French shrug with one shoulder and said:

"Indeed!"

Mariannie went on a few steps then stopped and faced me.

"Can you keep a secret, Miss Bittersweet?"

"O yes!" I answered.

"May I confide one to you?"

"Dear me, no! I don't believe in you, you observe."

"Listen to me!" said Mariannie, with a ludicrous affectation of consequence. "Really you must listen."

"Miss Smith," I returned, "your time has come. You are a persistent liar; you are a base woman, and you are a fool to fancy yourself humbugging me. I detest you; I shouldn't believe a word you would utter if you were to talk from now till doom'sday."

Miss Smith passed into her own room, and closed her door quietly—very quietly.

I, for my part, made a dry toilet as speedily as practicable, and descended to the dining-hall, where I proposed to announce my success in due season.

Breakfast was over, I found, and the apartment deserted, even by the servants. The table, however, was still spread for me, and a cup of coffee stood cooling beside my plate.

Before I had finished breakfast an unaccountable languor invaded my system. I could not understand it; I could not very well understand anything, in fact, my brain seemed bound, my limbs grew lumpy and refused service.

I was found by the servants a short time afterwards sitting with my head in my hands, and with the latter severely folded in my plate of hash. I had been drugged. At first I slept.

Miss Smith explained this phenomenon by a fictitious account of a fictitious remedy which she professed to have seen me administer to myself for an attack of neuralgia. Hence my condition occasioned no alarm.

When I awaked, it was with all my senses sharpened to a preternatural acuteness. It was a long while before I threw off that deathlike stupor. In the meantime I could hear, and did hear slight noises and low conversation at points quite remote from my chamber.

It was recreation evening. The girls were amusing themselves in No. 5, the room occupied by Dim Dark Distance. They were executing a grand series of tableaux called Reception at Court. I perfectly comprehended the details of the proceedings, although I was at the other extremity of the hall, and was, besides, more than half dreaming. All the jewelry of the establishment even to Baby Button's corals, had been

brought into requisition for this occasion. In the midst of this last crowning scene the retiring bell rang. I heard the girls throw off their finery and scamper away to bed. I heard Miss Grimshawe order them—she never *advised* anybody—*order* them to leave their jewelry where it was, proposing to assort it herself, and return it to the owners in the morning.

Miss Larkspur demurred; she had her diamonds out, very foolishly. They had been deposited in Professor Button's safe. Somebody else wanted a coral set, and our small Dim Dark was running frantic and fairly wringing her hands and tearing her hair over her pearls.

However, to oppose Miss Grimshawe was to take the surest way not to get what you wanted of her if Dim Dark had but known it. Though the former had only two grains of sense, and those, mathematical, she had any quantity of authority. So the girls went away grumbling, but leaving behind them their whole array of watches, chains, bracelets, necklaces, etc. I wanted Miss Grimshawe to take the collection down stairs and deposit it with Professor Button, and I dropped asleep and dreamed that I had told her to do so.

By and-by, from a great way off it seemed, a low, persistent, grating sound came to my ear. I rose upon my elbow and listened closely; then, thoroughly startled, I crawled without noise to the outer door of my room, which opened upon an upper piazza, and looked out.

The sound came from beneath, at the further extremity of our wing. Some one seemed to be tampering with a lock there. Presently, I caught a glimmer of light from that point, and leaning over the balustrade found it to proceed from a dark-lantern. A bull's eye, I afterwards heard it called. Another gleam discovered to me the shadows of two men. I heard them whisper to each other. They seemed to be inspecting some difficulty in their work, for the light appeared but a moment, and then the rasping sound recommenced.

What to do? To shriek out on the spot and frighten the ruffians away? I confess to a momentary womanly impulse in this direction—or to convey the alarm to Professor Button and the male servants? I felt that I did not understand robbers nor know how to deal with them. I therefore chose the latter course.

The only access to the professor's room, by the by, was through the identical hall into which the burglars were now endeavoring to force their way. However, I reflected that while I could hear the sound of their implements on the outside I should surely be in no immediate danger within; and in short, like Watts's sinner, or somebody else's, "if I perished I resolved I'd perish only there."

I stole down to execute my plan. My brain, my limbs, my entire person never rendered me more exquisitely perfect service than on that eventful night. Every muscle seemed instinct with a special intellect of its own. My physique followed the dictates of my flashing will with a precision wonderful to reflect upon.

I went below as still as the dead. I made but slow progress, for the halls and passages were perfectly dark, and I was obliged to grope my way along them by the sense of touch alone.

At last I reached the dreaded door at which the burglars were working. Beside it, but opening at right angles to it, there was an entrance into the studio, through which I must pass.

Just as I gained the studio door the robbers stopped work; and one of them held the lantern up to the front keyhole. The light shone through upon my bed-gown. The same person tried the door softly; it opened. He did not come in, but left it ajar. He and his associate were then silent, and I felt that they were moving away.

I entered the studio and pressed forward as fast as I dared. The studio windows were always secured at night by inside cross-bars and oaken shutters; now, however, to my intense horror, I perceived that one of them was standing wide open. Some of the household within had unclosed it to the robbers. So much was clear.

I felt a flutter near me like that of a woman's drapery, flitting by between myself and the wall. The tableaux jewelry was in process of transfer no doubt. I had not thought of the jewelry before. We had been betrayed by that flattering, smooth-faced female villain of a Mariannie, after all; and she was escaping.

Not so! I was inspired with a new project. Instantly I tore open a door just opposite me;—it was that of the paint-room—and, entirely unguarded as the creature was, I easily pushed her through it. I heard her fall with a dead heavy thump upon the earthen floor.

The paint-room, as I must explain, was a sort of cave, or cellar, underneath the western wing of the house. It had formerly been used as a laboratory, but was now devoted to the storage of paints and dangerous chemicals. The stairs had been removed as a precautionary measure; Professor Button always used a light ladder, from the loft, in going up and down. However, down Mariannie went without ladder or preamble.

In a moment I became aware that there was some other person in the room. I was sure of it, I heard a breathing near me. It was hard and half-panting, but repressed, and so low that in my normal condition I should not have heard it at all.

I stood stiff and still as a block of marble. Nobody could have heard me breathe. Whoever it was brushed against me.

It was one of the burglars; at least it was a man. I caught him by the arm. He attempted to grasp me by the throat, but I was too nimble for him. I whirled about in such a way as to bring him close to the open door of the paint-room. Evidently he did not understand his position; I slapped him in the face—if anything will confuse a man that will do so.

The fellow endeavored to seize my hands. At the same moment he stepped back. I gave him a thrust in the pit of the stomach, and had the pleasure of hearing him flounder backwards and tumble into the depths after Mariannie.

I thought he did not fall quite to the floor, but fancied he had caught at some support in his descent. Quick as lightning I slammed the door together behind him, drew the bolt, and ran as if possessed by the furies to report matters to Professor Button.

In the meantime the burglars made off with our jewelry and also, as we soon found, with the school plate.

Mariannie raved like a madman. She stormed, she cajoled, she threatened, she protested, she swore.

We heard nothing from our other prisoner; not a sound escaped him. We spoke to him, of course, but obtained no reply.

"Is he hurt?" I asked Mariannie.

She laughed a little low fierce chuckle, which was a fresh revelation of her nature.

"Let me up!" shrieked she, with a howl of rage a moment afterwards.

"Wind me around your little finger, my dear," said I; and I walked away. That was the woman of it.

The train which passed through town a few minutes later conveyed the following message to certain members of the Chicago police:

"Button High School is robbed. Come direct. Two prisoners for you."

On arrival of the six o'clock train next morning, there was a pull at the doorbell, followed by a call for Professor Button and Miss Smith. By request I went down. A gentleman stood before me whose face seemed familiar; but whom, nevertheless, I did not immediately recognize. He had close-cut black hair, black whiskers and keen—no, not keen exactly, but incisive gray eyes; eyes which expressed a profound capacity for intelligent observation. The gentleman's figure was peculiarly wiry and elastic. He had a wide retreating forehead. He was, in short, Doctor John S. Smith of Illinois Centre, but without wig, spectacles, embonpoint or cane.

The doctor offered me his hand.

"Good-morning, good-morning! I want Miss Smith, Mary Ann." This in a bustling, business-like way.

"Sir, Miss Smith is our prisoner, awaiting the police," I replied, bowing stiffly.

"The deuce she is! Why ma'am, Miss Bittersweet, ma'am, I'm the police myself."

I observed a discreet silence.

"Some mistake, Miss Bittersweet, I assure you. Look here! I want Professor Button and Miss Smith. You've two prisoners, eh? Who is the other one?"

"I don't know," said I. "He is one of the burglars. He won't speak."

Professor Button came in at this juncture, and between us both we managed to give the doctor, that is to say Detective Hausleigh, a tolerably accurate account of the night's adventure.

Mariannie, meanwhile, was stamping about on the earthen floor, and occasionally growling, "Let me up! Let me up!"

Detective Hausleigh ordered down a posse of men and brought the prisoners out.

Mariannie appeared dressed in a man's suit of substantial sheep's gray.

The second prisoner was our poor, simple, little Dim Dark Distance. Imagine my unbounded astonishment, my chagrin, my helpless mystification. Dim Dark, when drawn out of the paint-room, was handcuffed and gagged.

"Better look to those bracelets," remarked Mariannie, coolly, "they're too big to be safe."

Detective Hausleigh exchanged the girl's

handcuffs for a smaller pair procured from one of his assistants.

"Secure her feet," said Mariannie, "she's spiteful." Done.

"Remove the gag. Send for a physician. The girl is rather badly hurt, I believe. Somebody find a room for her with a bed in it. Let it be absolutely secure." Done again.

"See here, you, Hausleigh; I want the girl searched the first thing, mind. Have the job done up right. Set a couple of picked men to watch her. Look sharp, now!"

It dawned upon me at last. There was no mistake in the case, Dim Dark was the real accomplice of the burglars. She had planned the tableaux of the preceding evening for the express purpose of collecting our jewelry and having it at hand.

Dim Dark was the person whom I had mistaken for Mariannie and first pushed in the cellar.

The forcing of the outer door was a mere feint, on the part of the robbers, to divert suspicion from the real criminal. She had evidently laid her plans to remain at school till the heat of pursuit should be over, and had stolen a set of pearls from herself, in furtherance of this project.

And Mariannie—why, Mariannie was a man, "a great, awful man." I hereby give him public credit for having been a remarkably discreet one. He had been regularly trained, by the way, to womanly occupations of a certain sort, having served an apprenticeship of several months in a millinery establishment belonging to his sister.

Dim Dark had, it seemed, delivered up her booty, and was stealthily slipping back to her room when I entrapped her.

Dick Masters was Mariannie's masculine name. He had been watching the game. He had given orders to his men in the morning, during his brief masquerade as an old woman, and was on his way at the proper moment to signal them when I arrested him.

Dick had worked up this case beautifully. Before coming to us he had only a slight clue to the intended robbery, which, by the way, had been planned for months. He did not know the actors in the drama, but understood

that some woman was mixed up with the business who would be a student at Button High School. He had slowly unravelled the whole plot, and had made every disposition to seize the acting members of the gang and their booty. I thwarted his plans; no wonder he raved. So much for trying to wind a woman around one's little finger instead of being frank with her.

Dick Masters glared fiercely at me, and I glowered at him. I being a woman, was naturally the first to speak:

"Why did you drug me?" said I.

"For the same reason that I gagged one of you—to keep your mouth shut."

"O ho! So I could have spoiled your sport?"

"Pre-cisely!"

"And why did you call me a *see-sarpint*?"

"I didn't," said Dick.

"But you *did*!" retorted I. "I saw you."

"Well then, I did, but I don't remember it. We knew all about you before coming here, at any rate. The name fits you well enough I should say."

Dick Masters, I am glad to add, did not entirely lose his labor.

Dim Dark, though severely injured by her fall, at length recovered. She was tried, found guilty and sentenced to a long imprisonment.

The trial in question created a great sensation throughout the country. Developments then made led to the detection of the gang of ruffians with whom Dim Dark had been associated, and to the seizure of a quantity of booty, among which was our plate, and all our jewelry, except Miss Larkspur's diamonds.

In consequence of this stroke of good fortune Dick Masters was eventually promoted to a post, towards which he had for a good while in vain cast longing glances. He afterwards married a woman whom I like vastly; but of that another time.

I visited at Mr. Masters's not long since. We are excellent friends now-a-days, and the Masters, myself and our old common friend, Chief of Police Hausleigh, have many a hearty laugh together over the days when Dick was our *new pupil*.



OUR SCHOOL.--By A Big Boy.



HOW ever any fellow when he grows up can sham he cares about his old school, and regards his late master with affection, I'm blest if I know. When I'm a man, if ever I come back to Birchwell, it will be to punch old Switcham's confounded head

for him! I'm going to leave next month for good, and I mean to shy an inkstand at him before I go. O yes, I shall! If I think of it.

You want to know what our fellows are like. Why, they're just like other fellows at other schools. And we do just the same kind of things you know; grub-spreads of a night on the sly, and bolstering matches, and all that. O mind ye, school would be an awfully jolly place if there were no lessons, and no masters, and no getting up early in the morning. Especially if the cake man came every day, and there was nothing to pay. Wouldn't it be prime?

You don't know Jack Thawtless, do you?



He is a queer chap! Such a careless fellow—never has his hair neat, or his clothes decent. As for his books, the pages that aint dog's-eared are torn out. He's always in rows because the leaves where the lesson

is are sure to be out of his book, and then, you know, he can't learn, of course, and, O my, doesn't Switcham give it him! But he don't care a dump, bless you. He's as hard as nails. He aint a bad fellow neither—only if you lend him your knife or anything I'll bet you'll never see it again. He's such a chap to lose things—he loses everything, bar his temper. I have seen him lose that too! He's a plucky one, I can tell you, though he aint big. Didn't he thrash Joe Tarrant!

Joe Tarrant's the bully of our school—leastways he was before he and Thawtless had it out. He isn't cock of the school now, though! As soon as chaps found Jack could lick him, it seemed to occur to them to try if

they couldn't do it too, and they rather took it out of Joe, I can tell you. It was all along of his bullying little Tommy Twitter because he wouldn't do his exercise. And Jack said that if Tarrant couldn't do his own work he ought to do as he did—take the cane for it, and hold his tongue, not go bullying other fellows to do his work for him. Of course Tarrant said he'd lick Jack, and Jack told him he'd better try. Tarrant turned up his sleeves and jawed a good deal, but he didn't mean fighting, and Jack gave him the coward's blow, and so he was forced to fight. And Jack licked him a few. It was a good job for young Snoggle, the new boy, that Tarrant got a whopping the very day he came to the school first, or he'd have had a jolly time of it, I can tell you! What ever do you think? He came in gloves! And he had a silk hat on! He did just look soft.



Every fellow does, I think, when first he goes to school, but he soon gets all that knocked out of him, and he doesn't seem to remember when a new chap comes that he himself was exactly like him when he first came. Lor bless ye, we knocked Snoggle's hat into a pancake in two twos, and got him out of his gloves in no time. You would have laughed to see how silly he looked. He's grown out of all that now though. New chaps soon lose their greenness. Snoggle's no end of a fellow now, and don't he just play up larks with the new boys, that's all!

There's only one chap I reg'lar don't like at our school, and that's Pybus Major—Old Grumps we call him. Aint he a sulky fellow! He thinks all the fellows are against him, when, in reality it's he



that's against all the fellows. If you happen to take him up in class, my eye, isn't he savage! He threatened to do for young Chaffers, because he was first in arithmetic and got the prize he ought to have had if he hadn't lost his place. The fellows all say he tried to poison Chaffers in a tart, but I don't



think it was anything worse than slate-pencil dust he put in it. The only jolly thing about him is that he regularly defies

old Switcham. Switcham can't make anything of him—if he won't learn, he won't learn, and Switcham might flog him raw, and he wouldn't be able to make him learn. It's a downright lark to see Switcham blowing up and trying to make Old Grumps construe, when he has made up his mind not to!

The swell of our school is Arthur Smith—Julia we call him. He is a parlor boarder, and has lots of pocket money. What he spends on pomatum would keep an ordinary chap comfortably in tarts. He don't eat tarts, bless you! Says they are bad for the complexion. He wears a ring! And isn't he a chap for neckties! When he's dressed for church of a Sunday he just is a tiptop swell, I can tell you, with patent boots and a flower in his button-hole—and his hair curls too, and he has a watch-guard. Jenny Simmons, at the post-office, is awfully in love with him, and so's Miss Wise at Miss Bangham's school



—law! he has a long list of sweethearts, and sends off about a dozen valentines every year. And don't he get a lot too—some of 'em bad ones, but that's from fellows that are jealous of him. Mrs. Switcham thinks him such a young gentleman; and favors him

shameful! He aint a bad fellow though, and he'll stand treat like a lord if you go out with him—only it's rather slow, because he will march up and down the street for the girls to stare at him.

The stupidest chap in our school is Dick Thick. He can't learn! He isn't like Pybus who won't learn and don't care. He wants to

get on dreadful, for he says his mother can hardly afford to keep him at school; but he says somehow he finds what he reads all swims about and gets muddled, and what he learns by heart goes clean out of his head the moment he stands up in class. I don't think old Switcham ought to thrash him as he does, because it isn't his fault, you see, poor chap! He does sag away, but it's no use. He scrubs all the



elbows of his jackets out leaning on the desk; and his hair—it won't lie smooth anyhow if you brush it for a week—all along of his keeping always scrubbing it up on end as he sits mugging at his lessons.

I say—if you were to call and see me, you might ask old Switcham to give us a half holiday, and wouldn't that be jolly. And, I say, Mother S. kept back my pocket money because I broke a window quite by accident. "Tips" are jolly just! And we're going to have a feast in our bedroom next week, and we want spruce beer, cake and some lemonade.

P. S. Don't let Switcham see this.

P. P. S. If you do come, you might ask Switcham to let me go and dine with you at the hotel in the village. Awfully jolly that!

OUR SET: OR, WHO IS SHE?

BY CHARLES P. ILISLEY.

CHAPTER I.

CAMPOUNT.—THE RECEPTION.

THE town of Campont—rather I should say city, for it enjoys civic honors—is comparatively a small place in point of population, but territorially speaking, it is quite extensive, and, like the national capital, may be called a city of magnificent distances.

It is divided into four districts, so that the city forms a cluster of large villages, each settlement having its specific appellation, as Old Campont, Campont Haven, East and North Campont.

Campont is an academic town, the institutions of learning being located in Old Campont, whence most of its importance is derived.

As is the case generally with academic towns, Old Campont is noted for its exclusiveness. The social lines are very strictly drawn and very jealously guarded. No one is allowed the privileges of "Our Set," as it is styled, until his or her claims have been duly canvassed.

It would be difficult to clearly set forth the requisites necessary to obtain admission to the charmed circle. Those who preside over it appear to be governed by very arbitrary as well as very eccentric rules. Moral and intellectual worth does not seem to be particularly regarded by them. But it is noticeable that one with a plethoric purse finds no difficulty in obtaining easy entrance.

In this, however, the guardians of Our Set in Old Campont are by no means singular.

"Worth makes the man, and want of it the fellow," was an axiom announced by Pope. The poet was mistaken; he should have said "wealth." Possibly there may have been a typographical error.

Campont Haven, which is full of life and activity—a wide-awake, bustling place, with quite a metropolitan air about it—is looked down upon by quiet, sleepy, respectable Old Campont, and only a choice few of its residents are deemed fitting associates by those who constitute Our Set in the latter district. I am happy to state, however, that the unrecognized bear up very philosophically under their deprivation. As for the denizens

of East Campont, they are decidedly vulgar, the bulk of them being mere workers—mechanics, petty shop-keepers, and the like—*canaille*. The upper district, North Campont, is in every respect *terra incognita* to the elite.

Although I have selected Old Campont for the scene of my story, it is not that I consider it singular in its exclusiveness. You will find that in almost all small communities, especially if they happen to be seats of learning, the same general characteristics prevail, prominent among which is an assumption of superiority by a certain class; in other words, a spirit of snobbishness. On what ground this assumption is based is a social problem I have not been able to solve. Notwithstanding that it prevails extensively in old Campont, I beg of you not to look upon its inhabitants as a peculiar people.

Old Campont was in a slight flutter. Mr. Richard Perdan had recently completed a palatial mansion, and invitations had been sent out for what in olden times was called a "house-warming," but which the Perdans dignified with the title of "Reception." Of course no one outside of Our Set received the coveted pasteboard, for the Perdans were wealthy, and consequently moved in the "first circle." It is true, time was when Mr. P. revolved in a humbler sphere—when he found it difficult to make both ends meet, and when he was of no more account than ordinary mortals. But as by economy and perseverance he slowly acquired property, he gradually emerged from his lowly state, cast off his slough, as it were, and in process of years became one of the anointed.

On the evening in question, the Perdan mansion was in a blaze of light, and there was a constant flocking thitherward of the gay multitude. The Germanias welcomed with their inspiring strains the thronging guests. Occupying rather a conspicuous position in the *salle d'audience* was a group of young ladies, who amused themselves in watching the new arrivals, scanning the styles of dresses, and commenting on their wearers.

In the course of the evening an elderly lady entered the room, accompanied by a maiden apparently in the last of her teens.

whose appearance created quite a stir among the group just noticed. She was very fair. Her dress was simplicity itself compared with the elaborate toilets of most of the young ladies. She wore scarcely any ornaments; and yet so becoming was her attire, so peculiar her style of beauty, that the simplicity of the one enhanced the brilliancy of the other.

As the couple passed the group, the young lady seemed on the point of saluting one of their number, but catching the cold haughty look that was bent upon her, she checked herself, and proceeded on her way, something like a derisive smile playing over her features as she made a low remark to her companion.

"Who is she?" was the question simultaneously asked by several of the little knot of maidens.

"Very presuming, I must say!" said the one whom the young stranger was on the point of recognizing.

"But who is she, Miss Trafton?" asked one of the group of the lady who had just spoken. "She seemed to recognize you."

"I really cannot inform you, Miss Canby, who or what she is," rather crisply replied the one named as Miss Trafton.

"Where, then, have you met her?" persisted Miss Canby. "She certainly would have spoken to you, had you not frozen her with one of your looks."

Miss Trafton gave a light laugh as if the remark pleased her.

"I have seen her two or three times at the house of Mrs. Doten my dressmaker. She is a niece of hers, I believe, who has recently visited her."

"A dressmaker's niece, indeed!" was Miss Canby's horrified exclamation.

"Yes. Mrs. Doten took the liberty of introducing her to me, and meeting her there a number of times, I made some conversation with her. But I did not dream that she would presume on an acquaintance thus formed!"

"I do not think that she will again, Lizzie," laughed Miss Canby, "although she received your rebuff with a very impudent smile."

"Low-bred effrontery! I wonder the Perdans should have invited her."

"Perhaps she may be a relative," suggested one of the group. "Do you remember her name?"

"Dobbins, or some such common one, I think, although I did not pay much heed to it," was the scornful reply of Miss Trafton.

"She is not a relative," remarked one of the party. "I inquired of Jennie Perdan, who informed me that she was invited at the especial request of her grandmother, who was acquainted with her mother."

"The old lady has peculiar notions of gentility," sneeringly remarked Miss Trafton. "Perhaps she thinks that we may conform to them; but possibly she may be mistaken. For one, I am not disposed to associate with dressmakers' nieces!"

This settled the matter, and at once tabooed the stranger from Our Set, for Miss Trafton stood at its very head, and her dictum was a law unto its members.

Mrs. Reynolds, the mother of Mrs. Perdan, was peculiar in her notions of what constituted gentility—peculiar, that is, inasmuch as they differed from those of a certain class or clique of which Miss Trafton might be looked upon as the representative.

The old lady was blessed, or cursed, with a good memory. I use the word cursed, because from the pains evidently taken by many to forget certain facts, a good memory, we may reasonably infer, is deemed by them a curse. You will find a vast difference in people in regard to this faculty. Some there are who possess it in a wonderful degree, and take delight in tracing back their ancestry through generation after generation, and the further back they can follow them the greater is their pride and gratification. Others there are who seem stone blind as to the past, and are wofully ignorant, even of their grandmothers and grandfathers. I have found many such cases among Our Set in Campont.

As I have said, Mrs. Reynolds was gifted with a good memory. She remembered the time when fortune had dealt less kindly with her than of late years; she remembered when she was obliged to resort to the needle to eke out her not over-abundant means; she remembered when Mr. Perdan, now revelling in wealth, carried on a small grocery and variety store, and only by the closest application and the most rigid economy, managed to make both ends meet, as the saying is, and she remembered it to his advantage, too.

She also remembered, much to their chagrin, the origin of many of the young ladies who now held their heads so high, and who looked down so superciliously on those who had not the distinction of belonging to Our Set—this one's mother, or grandmother, or

ant, who took in sewing, taught school or gave lessons in music, for a living; that one's father, or grandfather, or uncle, who shoved a fore-plane, swung a sledge-hammer, handled the trowel or awl, or dealt out groceries by the ounce and pound, or pins, and needles, and tape, by the paper or yard, for the same laudable purpose.

Remembering these things, and being a woman of great good sense, Mrs. Reynolds manifested a very catholic spirit. She did not believe, nor could her daughter, Mrs. Perdan, persuade the old lady to think otherwise, that because a woman honestly earned her living she forfeited her claims to respectability; that the mere possession of wealth should command our respect, or that it should be regarded as evidence of superiority.

That as society is at present constituted there should be class distinctions, that intellect, station, wealth, occupation, should occasion lines of demarkation, she did not object; but that this or that class or clique should set themselves up, and arrogantly claim to be, *par excellence*, "good society," she did not and would not allow. She had no faith in nor respect for upper crustdom, and took somewhat of a malicious pleasure, when opportunity offered, of making it appear ridiculous and in exposing its folly. Briefly, the old lady was an inveterate foe to all shams.

CHAPTER II

A LITTLE MIXED.

"Ah, good-evening, Miss Trafton, Miss Canby, Miss Gates—ladies all!" said a young man, stepping out from the hangings of a bay-window, where he had been an unwitting spectator of the scene described in the last chapter.

"Good-evening, Mr. Arlington," was the general response, for Frank Arlington was an especial pet of the set. All the ladies greeted him with their most bewitching smiles, towards whom—so a little bird whispered to me—a covert rivalry existed as to who should stand best in his good graces.

He was a splendid looking fellow; not what you would call handsome, perhaps, but there was something about him that caught the fancies of the ladies, and the gentlemen as well. He had an erect and well-proportioned form, a manly bearing, and every lineament was stamped with intelligence.

In the Campont Law School, of which Arlington was a member, he was a man of mark. His disposition was lively and genial, his manners easy and wholly void of affectation, and he had that peculiar indefinable way with him, so "taking" with the fairer sex, and with the rougher, too, as for that matter.

Notwithstanding that, as I have said, he was the pet of Our Set, he was remarkably unassuming. Courted as he was—and he could not but be aware of it—his pride was not flattered nor his vanity excited. The truth was, he valued the preference shown him at its true worth.

He was not at all ambitious to shine as a lady's man—he was too sensible a fellow for that. He had a quite correct insight into the characters of his lady associates, and their adulation was prized accordingly. As for the rest, he was known to be of a very wealthy family, and moved in the "first circles" in his native place.

"A very pleasant gathering we have this evening," he said, addressing Miss Trafton.

"Y-e—a little mixed," was that lady's somewhat ambiguous response.

"Mixtures are very agreeable sometimes. Variety is the spice of life, you know, Miss Trafton."

"That depends on the component parts, Mr. Arlington, whether they are to our taste or not."

"O, as to that, a little acid or a little bitterness, like discords in music, tends to heighten the general effect. Simple saccharines are apt to be insipid."

The half-quizzical tone in which this was uttered, and the smile that accompanied the remark, rather puzzled the ladies.

"Speaking of music, Miss Trafton," he continued, "will you not favor us with some? That delicious thing of Schubert's has been haunting me ever since I heard you last sing it."

The lady was a trifle vain of her musical powers, which were, perhaps, a little above mediocrity, and she did not require much solicitation. As the party moved towards the music-room, Mr. Arlington asked:

"Who was the lady that entered the room a short time ago, with Mrs. Reynolds?"

"I really cannot inform you, as I have not the honor of her acquaintance," said Miss Trafton, with a touch of hauteur.

"She is not a resident here, I presume? Her face appears new."

"I think she is not."

"You do not know her name?"

"Dobbins, I think some one said," replied Miss Trafton, emphasizing the name with the slightest possible sneer.

"Dobbins—not very poetical!" said Arlington, with a smile. "I cannot say that I admire the name, however I may be disposed to its owner."

"I dare say," remarked Miss Canby, sarcastically, "you may see it exhibited in the 'Square' one of these days—'Doten and Dobbins, Dressmakers.'" Whereupon a titter ran round the circle, and the speaker plumed herself on saying something quite smart.

"Indeed, a dressmaker!" said Arlington, in mock astonishment. "If the young lady exhibits as much taste in the dresses of her customers as she does in her own, she must be highly prized by you."

"I am serious," continued the young man, detecting a sneering smile on the countenances of his listeners. "I do not know when I have met with a more becomingly dressed lady—that is, according to my taste."

"I did not suppose that you were so observant, Mr. Arlington, of the attire of ladies. It is a pity the lady did not hear your compliment!" Miss Trafton tried to smother her spiteful tone with a light laugh.

"O, I think a great deal of dress," rejoined Arlington, "and always take notice of a lady's. In my opinion it is a very good criterion of character. My judgment of persons is formed, I must confess, in no small measure from their apparel. The attire of ladies, from its variety, of course offers a broader field than that of gentlemen. There is comparatively but little dissimilarity in the garments worn by gentlemen, still there is sufficient, I think, to afford a test of character."

"May I ask, Mr. Arlington, what is your favorite style? Perhaps the question is superfluous, however, after the high encomium you have passed on the taste displayed by Mrs. Doten's niece?"

"I will inform you, Miss Trafton," said Arlington, with an amused smile. "My sentiments are embodied in that well-known passage of Thomson:

'A native grace
Sat fair proportioned on her polished limbs,
Veiled in a simple robe, their best attire,
Beyond the pomp of dress; for loveliness
Needs not the foreign aid of ornament,
But is, when unadorned, adorned the most.'

The conversation was brought to a close, on the entrance of the party into the music-room, by the general demand for a song from Miss Trafton. This compliment the young lady had been accustomed to receive at all the social gatherings she was in the habit of attending. Indeed, she would have been sorely disappointed had she failed to receive it, for she was the acknowledged musical belle of the place. Therefore, after the usual excuses, that she was out of practice, that she had a shocking cold, that she positively had not sung for an age—all stereotyped fibs—she was at last persuaded to take her seat at the instrument.

She got through her first piece very creditably, it being within easy range of her voice and not very difficult. It would have been better for her had she confined herself to music of like simple character; but casting her eyes around, she discovered among those drawn to listen to her performances, Mrs. Reynolds and the young stranger.

The latter, from some cause or other, had excited in her mind an unwonted interest, and against her she felt a growing prejudice, or antagonism. As if for the purpose of astonishing Mrs. Doten's niece, in her next attempt Miss Trafton seemed to exert all her efforts. I, who knew her well, could see that at half a glance.

The buzz of applause that followed her first performance having subsided, she was requested to favor the company with another. Nothing loth, she dashed at once into an Italian *bravura*, which was far beyond her power to render, even with ordinary correctness. She managed to get through with it, however, without absolutely breaking down; limping over difficult passages here, and slighting them there, winding up with a grand instrumental crash, her vocal powers tested to their utmost. Of course she received a surfeit of compliments, no one seeming to be aware of her imperfections.

CHAPTER III.

THE INTRODUCTION.—SPELLBOUND.

IN stepping back from the piano at the commencement of Miss Trafton's performance, ostensibly to make room for some ladies, Arlington found himself—was it by design?—in close proximity to Mrs. Reynolds. As soon as the performance was ended, the old lady said, addressing her companion:

"Permit me, Miss Deblois, to present my

friend, Mr. Arlington—Miss Deblois, Mr. Arlington."

"Deblois! a vast improvement on Dobbins," thought the young man, as he made his obeisance.

"You are fond of music?" asked the young lady, after the usual commonplaces.

"Exceedingly, Miss Deblois,"—he rather liked that, after Dobbins!—"it would be deemed heterodox to deny a fondness for it. Indeed, I am more than fond of it—I love it!"

"I am glad to hear that, for I have a passion for it myself, and it is pleasant to know that others are in sympathy with you."

By little and little Arlington and his new acquaintance became quite engrossed in the discussion of their favorite topic. He soon ascertained that she was no tyro, but possessed a thorough knowledge of the science of music, treating it as if she had made it a study.

He learned incidentally that she had pursued her studies both in Germany and Italy. He found, too, that she was a lady of superior intelligence in other matters; that she had seen much of the world, and had largely profited by her observation.

Arlington was struck with the freshness and originality of her ideas, and the fitting language in which she clothed them. Their range was loftier and more extended than were those of the generality of his lady acquaintances. Then the personal charms of the young lady aided not a little his growing interest in her.

She was, indeed, very beautiful. Her form was faultless in all its proportions. Her features were exquisitely moulded and full of character. In her manners there was a graceful ease, an intuitive refinement, which evinced an inborn gentility. When in repose her face would win your admiration from its pure loveliness; but when she engaged in conversation on subjects of more than ordinary interest, her large brown eyes would kindle, and her countenance light up with a marvellous radiance, reflecting so perfectly each passing emotion that it hardly needed language to interpret it.

Was it strange that Arlington should be held in delighted thrall by a being so every way captivating, whose exterior graces were but a type of those which adorned the mind and heart?

In the course of their conversation reference was made to Miss Trafton's singing, and Arlington asked her opinion of her last

performance. To this Miss Deblois demurred. She was averse to criticising—it would be unkind indeed to animadvert on a performance undertaken to please others. Although it was easier, she said, or most people seemed to find it so, to dwell on the demerits rather than the merits of a performer, she preferred to reverse the rule—to overlook what she deemed faulty, and to commend what her taste or judgment approved.

On being further urged, and learning from Mrs. Reynolds that Miss Trafton made great pretensions, and was not sparing of her criticisms on others, and therefore was a fair subject of remark, Miss Deblois guardedly said:

"The young lady possesses certain qualities of voice which are really excellent, especially in the medium register; but she lacks cultivation."

"Why, my dear child, that is the very thing she prides herself upon, her cultivation!" said the old lady.

Miss Deblois gave a light laugh.

"She should have kept to the scales a year or two longer," she remarked, "before she attempted song. Shall I ever forget my old Florentine master, how he kept me drilling at them! In regard to the piece last sung, I think the lady was a little too ambitious in selecting it. It is one of the most difficult that she could have chosen, and wholly beyond her powers. It is but fair to say that very few professional artists can do it justice. If the lady would confine herself to music of a simpler character, her efforts would be more likely to prove successful, and her audience, perhaps, would be better pleased."

"I fully agree with you," said Arlington, who wondered at the mildness of the criticism, especially when he recalled to mind the rebuff Miss Deblois had received on entering the room, to which, it will be remembered, the young man was an unwitting witness.

"My dear Julia, why will you not favor us with a song?" asked Mrs. Reynolds. "It is an age since I have heard any good music. Mr. Arlington, do try and persuade her."

"If my wishes could have any weight with Miss Deblois, I would certainly proffer them," said Arlington. "I see that Miss Trafton has left the instrument; shall I not conduct you to it?"

"I shall be happy to gratify your wishes," said the young lady, commencing to take off

her gloves. "I do so the more readily because I dislike to be urged, and because—would you believe it?—I have a little malice in my disposition, just the slightest grain!" A merry smile played over her features as she glanced archly in the direction of the group of young ladies who had gathered about Miss Trafton.

Although Miss Deblois was not aware of it, Arlington fathomed at once her meaning, and chuckled to himself in anticipation of the triumph that awaited the stranger; for although he was totally ignorant of her powers, he felt confident that she would succeed.

"Have you any choice?" she asked, as she took her seat, handing to Arlington her gloves and fan.

"Suppose that you try this." And Arlington placed before her, "I would that my love," arranged from Mendelssohn's part song.

Her first touch of the instrument was enough to satisfy one that she had a full command over it. When her rich full voice swelled out, clear and liquid as a bird's, the annoying buzz, which in large assemblies usually accompanies ordinary performances, was hushed, as if by magic. Until the last note was uttered, the deep silence was unbroken, and then the plaudits that broke forth simultaneously on every hand afforded unmistakable evidence of her perfect success.

She would have left the piano, but at the earnest solicitation of Arlington, backed by the suffrage of all around her, she consented to sing again. This time she selected "*O Mio Fernando*," from Donizetti's opera, "*La Favorita*."

From the very opening note she enchained the attention of the audience; but when she had fully launched upon the tide of song—had abandoned herself to the spirit of the composition—she seemed to lose all consciousness of her surroundings, and poured forth her impassioned notes, not to the listening throng about her, but to some one present only in her thought, on whom alone she lavished her unbounded stores of melodious wealth.

Her auditors stood as if touched by an enchantress's wand—silent, motionless. Here and there a hasty catching of the breath, a deep hurried respiration, testified to the marvellous spell she had thrown over them.

Arlington cast a glance upon the singer. She appeared wholly enwrapped in the mu-

sic; not as a performer, but as one borne unresistingly away on the flood of harmony of which she was the unconscious creator. A divine beauty illumined her countenance, as if it had undergone transfiguration. In every expression could be seen

"The mind, the music breathing from the face."

The last note died away, and still the company moved not—still the profound silence remained unbroken. Noisy applause would have been almost a sacrilege. That pervading stillness was the highest compliment that could have been paid to the young lady, and she so accepted it.

"Mere verbal compliments on your performance, Miss Deblois," said Arlington, as he conducted the fair singer back to Mrs. Reynolds, "would be entirely out of place. The spell of silence you have cast upon all is more eloquent than words. I can only tender you my poor thanks for the great gratification you have afforded me."

"Thank you, Mr. Arlington, you have amply repaid me," said the young lady, a faint color flushing her cheek as she bowed her acknowledgments.

"Look here, naughty child!" said Mrs. Reynolds, clasping the young lady's hand in both of hers. "Do you see these tears? Tears in my old eyes! do they not reproach you?" And she wiped away the glistening drops.

"May you never shed more bitter ones, my dear Mrs. Reynolds," was the affectionate response.

The closing words of Mendelssohn's song, the first performance of Miss Deblois—

"Still there, my love, it will haunt thee,
E'en in thy deepest dreams,"—

were fully verified in Arlington's experience, for long, long was he haunted with the witching strains heard that night.

CHAPTER IV.

THE DRESSMAKER'S NIECE.

IMMEDIATELY that the spell thrown over the company by the triumphant debut of the fair vocalist was broken, the whispered inquiry passed around the room, "Who is she?" But no one seemed capable of imparting the desired information. In the meantime many evinced a disposition to seek an introduction to the stranger, the young gentlemen especially.

Presently it was noised about in a myste-

rious manner—possibly Miss Trafton or Miss Canby could have thrown some light as to how the report originated—that the young lady was a niece of the fashionable dress-maker Mrs. Doten, and would probably become a partner in her establishment.

This astounding rumor operated as a wet blanket on the elite, who were about seeking the acquaintance of the accomplished stranger. A dressmaker! That would never do! And so they wrapped themselves in their icy mantles of exclusiveness, and turned away from the sweet singer as from one contaminated.

Several kind-hearted old ladies, however, after the party, called on Mrs. Reynolds, and knowing that she was a friend of the young singer, had many suggestions to make concerning her, and manifested not a little interest in her welfare. They could not, of course, associate with her, but they would condescend to patronize her.

A young lady so gifted, they said, should not be content to devote herself to the drudgery of needlework. A person endowed with such talent, with such a magnificent voice, could command her own price as a teacher or a public singer. They were a fortune to her. It would be a pity that the world should be deprived of the benefit of her extraordinary musical powers. They had no doubt but that a very select class, composed of ladies moving in the first circles, could be formed in Campont, who would give a liberal price for tuition, if Miss Deblois would take the matter in hand. Here was an excellent opening for the young woman; would Mrs. Reynolds consult with her in regard to the project, etc., etc.?

Yes, Mrs. Reynolds would mention the subject to Miss Deblois, who would, no doubt, feel under deep obligations for the interest manifested in her behalf. She would venture to thank them in her name. All the time a covert smile lurked around the eyes and at the corners of the mouth of the old lady, threatening every moment to break out more demonstratively, and which culminated in gentle merry laughter after her visitors had departed.

No one who had made the inquiry, "Who is she?" was half so interested in it, or puzzled him or herself over it so much, as Frank Arlington. He had learned from Miss Canby, and from the rumor set afloat, what she was. But he was not satisfied with this. He had his doubts. Mrs. Doten's niece she might

be, but that she had been educated and brought up to the occupation of a dress-maker, he could not believe.

Without doubt there were many intelligent, refined and accomplished dressmakers, but it was rare that you found one so intelligent, so refined, so accomplished as Miss Deblois. It was not common for dressmakers to receive such a thorough education; they were not accustomed to go abroad to perfect their musical studies, or to acquire foreign languages; they were not habituated to the highest intellectual circles, as it was very evident Miss D. had been; they did not, as a general thing, possess that polished ease, that gracefully careless, independent bearing, that indescribable but unmistakable *tone*, so characteristic of the young lady.

So thought Arlington, and the more he dwelt upon the subject the less able was he to arrive at any satisfactory conclusion. He did not attempt to conceal from himself the fact that the young lady had made a deep impression upon him. Her great personal beauty, her extraordinary talent for music, and above all, her vast intellectual superiority to the young ladies he was in the habit of associating with, although they moved in the "first circles," and she, according to their estimation, ranked low down in the social scale, gave her preeminence in his mind.

The interest Arlington felt to learn something of the antecedents of Miss Deblois arose from curiosity rather than a desire to ascertain her social status. It was sufficient for him that she received the favorable countenance of Mrs. Reynolds. Even if she were reduced to the necessity of seeking employment as a dressmaker, that fact would not weigh a feather with him. He had no reverence, but little respect for caste. He recognized class distinctions, but he would not suffer himself to be governed despotically by them. In brief, he was an independent, self-reliant man, who did his own thinking, and who regulated his actions according to his own sense of right and propriety.

As for Miss Trafton and her set, Miss Deblois was not deemed of sufficient importance to be made a subject of remark. And yet, strange enough, seldom was there a meeting of the favored few, that the lady in question was not in some way brought into discussion. At such times, you may be sure, her beauty, her dress, her manners, her style of singing, and, above all, her pretensions,

underwent a pretty thorough criticism. If there is any truth in the ear-theory, Miss Deblois's left ear must have tingled very severely at times!

But a short time after the Perdan reception, two or three of the ladies belonging to Our Set chanced to meet, when Miss Canby spoke of Miss Deblois's singing.

"She has a passable voice," remarked Miss Trafton, "but I cannot say that I admire her style."

"Mr. Arlington is in raptures with it," said Miss Canby, well aware that Arlington's commendation of the stranger would nettle her friend. "He says that there was not one of all the celebrities he heard in Paris, who, in his opinion, surpasses her."

"Mr. Arlington may entertain such opinions as he pleases; I think that she is monstrously affected!" rejoined Miss Trafton, a grain tartly.

"Horribly affected!" chimed in Miss Gates, who was Miss Trafton's echo.

"It is curious how people differ," remarked Miss Canby; "what you call 'affectation,' he styles *abandon*. He spoke particularly of the 'naturalness' of her singing. There was not the least attempt at display, he said. She sang from the impulse of feeling—poured her whole soul into the music; you could see that by the rapt expression of her countenance."

"I was unable to discover anything particularly expressive in her features," was Miss Trafton's sneering reply. "Had I made as close a study of them as Mr. Arlington appeared to, I might have been more successful perhaps."

"We do not all see alike," said Miss Canby, preparing another thorn. "There's Professor K—, by the way, he says her pronunciation of the Italian is perfect, and Professor V—, who says she speaks German as correctly as a native, both alluded to the spirit and vivacity of her conversation and her 'speaking face.' They eulogize her as irresistibly charming."

"Bah! I am fairly sick hearing her praises!" said Miss Trafton. "It is just like the gentlemen; they are caught by every new face, or charmed by every new voice. As long as the novelty lasts they are in ecstasy; when that is worn off their devotion ceases."

"That is very true," rejoined Miss Canby, adding, with a light bectoring laugh, "and some of us may congratulate ourselves that

they do weary of their new divinities, and in time return to their old worship. But I had thought that Mr. Arlington might prove an exception. Instead of that, however, he seems more infatuated than all the rest. I met him with Miss Deblois on — street last evening, and he was so much engrossed with her that he quite slighted poor me. It really looks as if there was something *serious* there. Lizzie, does it not so to you?"

"It is a matter of perfect indifference to me, I assure you, Miss Canby, whether there is anything 'serious' in it or not!" haughtily rejoined the lady addressed, who evidently winced under the meaning smile and glance that accompanied her companion's remark. "If Mr. Arlington prefers to associate with dressmakers and the like, he has unquestionably the right so to do, however questionable his taste may be!"

Satisfied with the wormwood that she had administered, Miss Canby amiably suffered the subject to drop, and the conversation drifted into the usual inanities in which gossiping young ladies are prone to indulge.

CHAPTER V.

SOMETHING "SERIOUS."—MUSICAL PARTIES.

As Miss Canby had mischievously insinuated, it really did look as if there was something "serious" in the attentions paid to the stranger by Arlington.

Since his introduction to her he had assiduously courted her acquaintance, framing the most ingenious excuses to call upon her, and happening by the most singular coincidences to encounter her on her walks.

It is very much to be feared that the "Moot Courts" and "Parliaments," of which Arlington was a prominent member, and which he had made it a point to regularly attend, were sadly neglected, and that Mrs. Reynolds's pleasant drawing-room, instead of the "Law School," wooed his evening steps, where attractive musical soirees were of weekly, sometimes semi-weekly, occurrence.

Being extremely fond of music, and one of those dear old ladies—Heaven bless them!—who, although age has frosted their hair and graven wrinkles in their brows, keep their hearts unfrosted and unwrinkled, Mrs. Reynolds had instituted these parties, primarily for the gratification of herself and her more juvenile friends. She had, however, another object in view. She desired to bring about more cordial relations between the

young ladies of the place and Miss Deblois, for whom she manifested quite a motherly interest.

She may have had still another object in view; there is no telling. The old lady had a keen observant eye. She had detected, or thought that she had detected, a growing attachment between her young friend the singer and Mr. Arlington. I do not say that her purpose, through these musical parties, was to further this mutual attachment. The idea this moment has entered my head, and I thought I would make a note of it.

Be this as it may, she had invited a number of the musically gifted of her young friends to meet on stated evenings at her house for mutual entertainment. A goodly number gathered at the first meeting, made up principally of those belonging to Our Set, including, of course, Miss Trafton.

But the good intentions of Mrs. Reynolds seemed likely to be frustrated. Late in the evening, when Miss Deblois made her appearance, and was invited to take part in the performances, Miss Trafton and her clique at once grew frigid and stately. So marked was the change in their demeanor, that it became at once apparent to all, and Arlington felt his blood boil at their insolent effrontery.

If, however, they expected to abash the stranger, they were signally mistaken. As if inspired with feelings akin to their own, she treated them as cavalierly as if, in her estimation, they were the merest nobodies.

It was decidedly refreshing to note with what nonchalance she regarded their superciliousness. She moved among them cool, collected, self-poised, with a very queenlike air. To their chilling politeness she opposed an icy courtesy. Calm and unruffled, with not the slightest manifestation of resentment, she seemed to regard her antagonists with a high-toned superiority, a lofty condescension, which completely baffled their arrogance, and left her the victor instead of the vanquished.

The members of Our Set did not condescend to attend another meeting—"to expose themselves to the brazen impudence of a dressmaker's niece," as Miss Trafton indignantly protested. Notwithstanding this defection, the parties were kept up, the places of the absentees being filled with a more amiable and a more effectual class, not quite so *tonnish*, perhaps, but vastly more agreeable.

Arlington and Miss Deblois constantly at-

tended the meetings, and it soon began to be considered an understood thing, that the former should call on the latter and accompany her to and from the place of entertainment. They got into this way, naturally, as it were, without any previous agreement to the effect; so that, if at any time Arlington perchance made his appearance alone, the inquiry was at once made, "Where is Miss Deblois?"

As a consequence of this state of affairs we all can predict what followed. A rumor soon circulated that Miss Deblois and Mr. Arlington were engaged; whereat all upper-crustdom held up its hands in holy horror. The report, I believe, was premature, but neither of the parties thought it worth while to contradict it, nor did they permit it to affect the intimate relations that existed between them.

One day a young lady thickly veiled called at Mrs. Reynolds's, and on being ushered into that lady's presence, she asked, in a hesitating manner:

"Is this Mrs. Reynolds?"

"That is my name," was the old lady's reply, as she gazed curiously on her caller.

"I have come from Mrs. Doten, madam, to work on your dress," said the young lady, demurely.

"To work on my dress! There must be some mistake—"

"No, madam," interrupted the caller, "I think I am right. I am the dressmaker's niece!" added she, dropping a curtsy, at the same time raising her veil.

"You little madcap hussy!" exclaimed Mrs. Reynolds; "what an excellent actress you would make! But sit down, Julia, I have something to say which interests you very much." And the old lady's face was wreathed in quizzical smiles.

"You must know, Miss Deblois," she continued, "that a number of my lady friends called on me some time since with a proposition concerning you, which I should have mentioned to you before."

"I am very grateful, I am sure, for their interest in my welfare," said the young lady, with great apparent candor. "Pray what did they propose?"

"That you should take a class of misses and give them lessons in music; the class to be very 'select,' and the pay very liberal, understand. I promised to mention the subject, but it slipped my mind until this mo-

ment. I also ventured to thank them in your name for the suggestion."

"I am very glad that you did," said Miss Deblois, "for they were entitled to it."

"They seemed to think that you would find it more remunerative, and certainly much more 'respectable,' or 'genteel,' than dressmaking. "Now, child, what do you think of it?" And there was a merry twinkle in the eyes of the genial old lady.

"They are very, very kind, and I am exceedingly grateful," replied the young lady, with the same sobriety of tone and manner she had maintained all along; "pray what would be your advice? I am a novice, you know, in teaching, although I dare say I should become used to it in a very little while. Perhaps it will afford me a better living than dressmaking, and if—and if—" Here the sober lines of her face gave way, and a merry peal of laughter rang through the room, in which the old lady heartily joined.

"Just think of it," said the latter, wiping her eyes, "dressmaker and music-tea-cher-cher!" A fresh burst of laughter prolonging the word.

It was some time before they became sobered down to rational conversation.

"Take off your things, Julia, and stop to tea. There will be somebody along to see you home in the evening, I daresay. I wish to have a good chat with you."

The young lady complied, and during the "chat" that followed Miss Deblois remarked:

"I hope that Mr. Arlington—that you did not consider me rude the other evening, or that I betrayed too much feeling."

"Feeling! why, dear child, you were a veritable iceberg! As for rudeness, I wondered at your forbearance under such provocation. Mr. Arlington I saw was in a towering rage. I was on nettles, just to whisper a few words in Miss Trafton's ear. They would have lowered her haughty crest, I'll be bound. My promise to you only restrained me."

"I am very glad that you remembered it. Perhaps the lady deemed her superciliousness a mark of good breeding; a very common mistake a certain class of minds are prone to fall into."

"Very likely. She and her set seem to ignore the fact, that the dominant characteristic of a truly well-bred and refined lady is courtesy; as also, that an insolent bearing, especially to those in a lower walk of life, is as positive a mark of a vulgar mind." ■

"Pray tell me on what do these ladies rest their claims for superiority?" asked Miss Deblois? "Is it birth, intellect, manners, or wealth?"

"On neither, my child, unless, in a few cases, the latter. The most of them are mere weeds of yesterday, who would be mortified to recognize their ancestors. As for their intellects, poor things! their minds would be crushed under the pressure of one solid, sensible idea. Flirting and gossiping are their loftiest ambitions. In regard to their manners, you have had a sample of them. The truth is," continued the old lady, who was on her hobby, "they belong to a mushroom aristocracy, such as is usually found in a place like this, and which is based solely on assumption. I am pretty well acquainted with those who compose Our Set here, and there is scarcely one of them in possession of a quality that should distinguish her from the common herd, unless it be arrogance, which too often verges upon impudence."

"Yours is not a very flattering picture," said Miss Deblois, with a smile.

"It would not be truthful if it were," was Mrs. Reynolds's rejoinder. "But let us talk of something else. I know that I am apt to become excited, and to express myself strongly when on this subject; and I dare say that you will set me down as an irritable old lady. I cannot help it. I abominate all pretence."

"And yet you are one of the elect?" was the arch inquiry of the young lady.

"Yes, I suppose that they rank me among them. But I belong to the elderly class, who do not carry their high notions to such ridiculous lengths as the younger set; or if they do, they have the tact to modify their deportment by a graceful dignity. Though they may exhibit a little *hauteur*, they are not offensively rude. There, I will not say another word! Let us have some music, Julia, and exorcise all evil spirits."

CHAPTER VI.

A WALK AND A TALK.—EXPLANATIONS.

MRS. REYNOLDS was right in her conjecture that some one would happen along to accompany her guest home. In the course of the evening Arlington dropped in, and expressed great surprise, and greater gratification, in meeting with Miss Deblois, as though her being there was any secret to him!

The gentleman received a most cordial greeting. His visit was very timely; they

had been hoping some one would drop in, said Mrs. Reynolds. A very pleasant evening was passed, and Arlington, of course, escorted the young lady home.

It was an evening of rare beauty. The moon was at its full; the heavens were flecked here and there with soft downy clouds; a gentle breeze just stirred the tree-tops and attuned the atmosphere; the air was resonant with the dulcet notes of Campont nightingales, *videlicet*, tree-toads. In fact, it was one of those nights when it seems a shame to keep within doors—a night made on purpose for lovers.

In addition to the splendor of the evening, the truly pleasant walks about Campont, green and verdurous with trees and shrubbery, and so retired, tempted the young couple to prolong their walk.

During this walk Miss Deblois announced that it was her intention to leave Campont in a few days.

Leave Campont! Arlington had been thinking with regret of his own departure at the close of the term, a few weeks distant, but he did not dream of a separation before then. He was taken completely by surprise.

The announcement hastened an event that he had for some time contemplated with no small degree of anxiety. He was wholly ignorant of the antecedents of his companion. All that he knew for a certainty was that she was an orphan. He had no doubt, from the grace and polished ease of her manners, that she had been accustomed to the most refined society.

Arlington's hypothesis was, that in her education and accomplishments she had received all the advantages that wealth could bestow; that on the death of her father she found herself, as, alas, many thus luxuriously reared find themselves on the disruption of the domestic circle by the death of its head, without material resources—found that the riches she had anticipated had long before taken to themselves wings—that she was poor, in a word, and dependent on her own exertions for a livelihood.

This was Arlington's theory, and he had determined, being independent in his means, to make her an offer of his hand, and, if she accepted it, to restore her to her former position in life. The time and the occasion seemed propitious, and before they parted for the night the important overture was made.

It was neither accepted nor rejected. Af-

ter expressing her sense of the honor he had done her, she stated that there were certain circumstances that forbade her giving a final answer at that time. She said she could not fully explain herself that evening, but that she would communicate what little she had to say to him in writing in the morning. Although the young man had not accomplished all that he desired, he parted from his lovely companion in any but a desponding spirit.

The next morning Arlington awaited the promised communication with not a little impatience, and when he received it he could not repress a slight fluttering of the heart as he opened the daintily written note. Its tenor was as follows:

"Respect for myself, as well as for the generous confidence you repose in me, impels me to explain the rather equivocal position in which I have been placed since I came here. It is proper to state, that although I am known as the niece of Mrs. Doten, she is not a relative; if she were, I know of no reason why I should disown the relationship.

"She attended my mother during her last illness, and remained in our family until it was broken up on the death of my father. During her residence with us we were accustomed to address her as "Aunt Doten," a habit I still retain. My visit to Campont was solely on her account. I elected to reside with her because I did not wish to go into society, preferring retirement, and because I desired as much as possible the society of one who is largely entitled to my gratitude and love. Otherwise I should have accepted the kind invitation of Mrs. Reynolds, a dear friend of my mother, and been *feted* instead of frowned upon.

"I said that I did not wish to go into society. Indeed, I soon found, when it got noised around that I was a niece of Mrs. Doten, that 'society' was not disposed to receive me. I was very well contented to be excluded.

"At the solicitation of Mrs. Reynolds, I attended the reception of her daughter, Mrs. Perdan. On my entrance I was about speaking to a young lady whom I had met and been introduced to at Mrs. Doten's, but I at once found by her manners that I had taken an unwarrantable liberty. Her remark, which I overheard, 'dressmaker's niece,' informed me of the mistake I had made. I was not surprised at the feeling she manifested, nor did I resent it. I have seen the same unamiable spirit too often exhibited to

be affected by it. On the moment a girlish freak possessed me, I determined to permit the impression to pass current that Mrs. Doten was in reality my aunt, and Mrs. Reynolds at once favored the innocent deception. It seems, however, that rumor made me not only a niece of the worthy woman, but that I was to be her future partner.

"The punishment for the little artifice to which I lent myself, you, Mr. Arlington witnessed at the first musical party given by Mrs. Reynolds. Perhaps it should be taken as a warning against indulging in such frivolities hereafter!

"But let me now come to what more directly interests us. Rising superior to the prejudices of 'caste,' you last night did me the honor of soliciting my hand. It was to me a proof, although I did not need it, of the sincerity of the sentiments you professed, and, believe me, I duly appreciate them:

"My sole reason in withholding an answer, was a desire that you should meet me in the circle in which I have been accustomed to move, before finally deciding on a matter that will vitally affect our happiness. I shall proceed from here to Philadelphia, and thence go to Newport to spend the warm season. We shall probably meet there, as you tell me that you propose visiting the latter place during the coming vacation. If on a renewal of our acquaintance your sentiments should remain unchanged, I will not conceal from you that it will afford me the highest gratification. Pray excuse this long epistle, etc."

In a few days after this letter was written Miss Deblois took her departure. Some little surprise was manifested by those who hoped to secure her services as music teacher that she should slight so good an opportunity. But she soon passed out of mind, and her name was never mentioned, save that occasionally, Miss Trafton, Miss Canby, or some of that clique, would make sarcastic allusions to her in the presence of Arlington, who received and parried them with the greatest good-nature.

The time hung heavy on that gentleman's hands after the lady had left. He formerly had whiled away his leisure time in the law library, hunting up authorities for some case in hand, but now he had lost all relish for the calf-bound volumes, and instead of spending his evenings in "Moot Court," or "Parliament," as had been his wont, he was given to solitary wanderings and musings by moon-

light in the sequestered walks of Campont. Term time, however, at last closed, and with a sigh of relief Arlington packed up for a flying visit home, and then—hey, for Newport!

With the arrival of warm weather the fashionable world of Campont also took flight, some for the mountains, some for Saratoga, and some for the seaside. Of course the Traftons and the Canbys were off with the rest.

Although the shady avenues, the quiet, rural aspect of Campont, would seem to render it the place of all others for a sojourn during the hot months, yet fashion demanded the exodus, and so Our Set generally left their comfortable, cosy homes, and subjected themselves to all the annoyances and discomforts of a popular resort, leaving Bridget and Patrick in the full enjoyment of what they vainly sought.

The Traftons and the Canbys were for some time undecided where they should pitch their tents. But the young ladies having heard that Arlington intended to visit Newport, they put their heads together, and with a little skillful management turned the scales in favor of that place.

Miss Trafton, in particular, flattered herself, that with her formidable rival out of the way, she should easily accomplish certain designs she entertained against the peace, liberty and happiness of the young gentleman just mentioned.

CHAPTER VII.

THE GRAND HOP.—MUTUAL SURPRISES.

FOR nearly a week Arlington had been at the famous watering-place, and not a glance had he caught, not a hiss had he heard of his lady-love. Every fresh arrival was eagerly watched, but all in vain—

"She came not, ah, she came not!"

He soon began to look upon Newport as an intolerable bore, and to wish himself anywhere else, away from the frivolous crowd.

One evening he was strolling with an acquaintance about the place, when, as he was passing one of the many private cottages that abound there, his attention was arrested by the voice of a lady singing. He stopped abruptly and listened. Full, mellow and birdlike, the notes swelled upon the evening air.

That voice, could he be mistaken in it?

He lingered with breathless interest until the performance closed. Curiously enough, it was Mendelssohn's "I would that my love," the very piece that he had selected for Miss Deblois at Mrs. Perdan's reception.

"Who lives here?" asked Arlington, eagerly, as the strain ceased.

"The Hon. Mr. —, of Philadelphia," was the name given, a gentleman known throughout the land for his eminent station and immense wealth.

"His establishment is considered the most perfect in the place," added his friend. "And, by the way, Arlington, the divinity who presides over it, the one whose voice has cast such a spell upon you, a niece, is unsurpassingly lovely, a style of beauty that would just suit your taste. She has, besides, still more solid charms, being an heiress of fabulous wealth.

"What is the name of this paragon?" asked Arlington, in a jesting manner, seeking to conceal his interest in the answer.

"Her name is Bentley, and she would be decidedly the belle of the season, were she not averse to accepting the rather equivocal honor."

"Bentley," said Arlington, with a touch of disappointment in his tone; "strange that I have never met with her."

"Not at all; she lives quite retired. She only rides out occasionally with her uncle, avoiding as much as possible the fashionable drives. Some will have it that she is rigidly, perhaps the better term would be frigidly, exclusive; but those who know her best aver that she is directly the reverse, being remarkably affable and not in the least up-ish."

All that night that voice and that strain, "I would that my love," ran in Arlington's head, haunting, like witch-music, his waking and his sleeping hours.

The next day Arlington sauntered upon the beach, watching the bathers—strolled along the favorite walks scanning the promenaders—took a long drive, eagerly scrutinizing each turn-out. But vain was his quest.

"The face, the form he pined to see
Met not his ardent gaze."

It was the height of the season; where could she be? The inquiries he had made of those who were posted in regard to the arrivals and departures, if a party by the name of Deblois was or had been there, were answered in the negative. Perhaps sickness had prevented the visit? And yet in the

last letter Mrs. Reynolds had received from her, she mentioned that she was on the eve of departure for Newport. Some sudden obstacle must have arisen to prevent or postpone the trip.

Insufferably dull to the young man appeared Newport, although never before so thronged and gay. He had many acquaintances there; every night there were reunions, hops, music, etc., but they had no attractions for him, and generally he kept himself aloof from them.

He was sitting "solitary and alone," on a cliff, gazing in the offing, dotted by numerous yachts and other small craft, scarcely noticing an object in his abstraction, when his companion of the night before approached him.

"Hey, Arlington, my boy, dreaming as usual!" was his salutation. "One would deem you in love, or suffering some other grievous calamity."

"It is terribly dull here; don't you find it so, Bingham?"

"Dull, man! there never was so brilliant a season. I say, old fellow, you're getting in a bad way. What the deuce has come over you? You must go to the hop to-night—a very *recherche* affair at the Union, the very *creme de la creme*, and the grand hop of the season. *Ecoutez!* Miss Bentley is to be there, Frank, her first appearance; the lady, you know, whose voice you were so crazy to listen to last night. Will you go?"

Arlington had a curiosity to see the lady whose voice bore such a striking resemblance to one he remembered so well, and he did not require much urging, and it was settled that his friend should call for him.

"By the way," said his companion, as the two strolled away from the spot, "there's a big swell here from New York, as rich as muck—excuse the odorous comparison, but it is so *apropos*—who has avowed his purpose of wooing and winning the peerless Bentley, the conceited puppy! He woo her! he win her! the idiot!"

"Who, or what is he?" asked Arlington, smiling at the contempt manifested by his friend.

"Some Tompkin, or bumpkin, who has made a lucky hit in Wall Street. There he goes, the gilded calf!" pointing to a flash-looking young man, just then dashing by in a tawdry turn-out, resplendent with gilt and varnish.

"Egad, Arlington," added Bingham, as

"They ascended the steps of the hotel, "imagine the imperial Bentley mated to such a thing as that!"

"But I have not seen this paragon, remember."

"No, but you will see her to-night; and all I have to say is, take care of your heart, my boy!"

It was well along in the evening when Arlington and his friend entered the brilliantly-lighted hall. There was a pause in the dances, and the two were slowly making their way through the richly-dressed throng to the upper part of the room, where there appeared to be more space.

There was a small knot of ladies and gentlemen engaged in lively conversation, who seemed to attract more than ordinary attention. A marked deference appeared to be shown them, the crowd refraining from intruding upon their little circle, although one of the party was subjected to a battery of eyes constantly levelled at her.

"There she is!" said Arlington's companion, "the lady in point-lace dress, whose back is towards us. She is conversing with Judge Peyton. The other gentleman is the famous Senator —. She binds all to her chariot wheels!"

"She has a splendid figure!" was Arlington's admiring reply. "And if her face—By heavens, it is she!" he abruptly exclaimed, as the lady at that moment turned her face towards them.

"She? Who?" inquired his friend, with not a little curiosity, noticing the sudden start of his companion and the flushing of his cheeks.

Oddly enough, similar manifestations of astonishment were elicited from other lookers-on, merely from the lady's change of position.

That afternoon the Traftons and Canbys had arrived at Newport. They had come too late, or were too much fatigued, to participate in the festivities of the evening, if indeed they could have procured cards of admission.

As they could not mingle with, Miss Trafton and Miss Canby determined to be spectators of the gay assemblage. For this purpose they had stationed themselves at one of the piazza windows where, not exposed to observation themselves, they commanded a good view of the interior of the hall.

The fame of Miss Bentley's wealth, beauty, position and superior intellectual endow-

ments had already reached their ears, and they had a very natural curiosity to see one who was the theme of so much admiring comment. They were accompanied by a gentleman friend who was well "up" in all matters relating to Newport.

From their position they had a full view of the little group already mentioned, and the lady with her back towards them was pointed out as the much talked of Miss Bentley.

"What a perfect figure!" was Miss Canby's candid remark.

"What exquisite taste in her dress!" echoed Miss Trafton.

"Yes, and what magnificent diamonds!" added the former, with an envious sigh.

"I wish that she would turn her head that we might get a sight of her face," rejoined Miss Trafton.

As if in obedience to the wish expressed, the lady turned full towards them.

"Miss Dobbins, as I live!"—"Miss Deblois!" were the joint breathless exclamations of the two ladies at the discovery they had made, while a blush of mortification crimsoned their cheeks, as their thoughts reverted to their treatment of the lady in Campont.

Full and ample would have been the revenge of the "dressmaker's niece," for all the slights she had suffered, could she have witnessed the chagrin of her concealed spectators.

The reader may, perhaps, faintly imagine the feelings with which they gazed upon one, the "observed of all observers," whom they had, in their foolish pride, looked down upon as unworthy of being received as an associate. In the pleasing indulgence of such agreeable feelings, and in the hope that their reflections may prove profitable to them, I take leave of the young ladies.

I shall not attempt to portray the emotions of Arlington when he recognized in the regal Miss Bentley the unassuming, neglected Miss Deblois. I think that he would have been better pleased had he met with her in a less exalted position. When he knew her as the niece of Mrs. Doten, he did not deem it condescension on his part to solicit her hand; but now he seemed to think that it would be condescension on her part to bestow it.

He hesitated for a moment. Should he claim her acquaintance? Should he venture to renew his suit? These questions were

soon solved. When he approached her, the sudden joyful start of surprise that she gave, the quick eager extension of her hand, the telltale blush which mantled her cheek, the warm cordial greeting, swept away at once and forever all distrust from Arlington's mind.

"If I might accept this kind welcome as an augury, my happiness would be complete," said Arlington, in a low voice, as he took the hand held out to him.

"If so great a boon can be secured by so simple a process, you would be very unwise not to do so!" was the significant rejoinder, as the lady returned his gentle pressure.

Thus, then and there, the compact was sealed that bound their hearts in an indissoluble union.

"Why, my dear Julia," asked Arlington, a few evenings after, as they sat in her uncle's villa talking over her visit to Campout, "did you appear there under an assumed name?"

"It was not assumed, Frank. My name is Julia Deblois Bentley. After my chilling reception, a girlish freak led me to drop my patronymic. I should have disabused your mind in regard to it, but in the hurry of my departure forgot to do so."

"It will be an endeared name to me," said Arlington, with pardonable fervor, "as associated with her who first enlisted my love."

As the conversation of affianced lovers, however interesting to the parties themselves, may not be particularly edifying to the general reader, I here close my report.

OUT OF THE JAWS OF DEATH.

BY RETT WINWOOD.

I.

ON a rude bench before a fisherman's cottage sat a wrinkled old woman, with mesh-block and needle, mending nets and singing a snatch of song in a cracked, shrill voice, as she worked.

Stephen Trevor and Maud Meredith, sauntering slowly along the amber sands in the direction of the hotel, paused near. They were in earnest converse. Maud, severely set upon, was finally compelled to make use of woman's peculiar weapon—sarcasm—since the obstinate fellow beside her could be silenced in no other way.

"That's what I should come to, mayhap, were I to marry with you, Stephen Trevor," she said, giving her head a scornful toss as she pointed out the old woman. "I have not taken leave of my senses, to be in love with such a vocation. I humbly crave your pardon, but you force me to utter some unpleasant truths by persisting in this idle talk."

Stephen bit his lip, very much hurt. He might have been angry, as well, but for a strong conviction that Maud had made these remarks on purpose to vex him.

"Then personal merit counts for nothing!" he exclaimed. "Money and position are the standard by which everything is to be gauged. Because I am a poor lawyer, and have naught but my honest love to offer, you despise me and that."

In his earnestness, he caught her hand, covering it with impetuous kisses; she, poor girl, had not the strength to resist or to draw it away.

"What are you doing?" she cried, at last, mustering courage. "You have no right to treat me so rudely. Let me go."

He looked at her fixedly and sadly, a moment, imprinted a last kiss, then dropped her hand.

"It is right for you to scorn me, Maud," he said, slowly. "I am a rude, awkward fellow, and not half good enough for you. I did think there was merit in the great love I bear you—because I had nothing else to recommend me, perhaps. Since you will not listen, I shall never again distress you by telling how true and faithful that love is."

At last she grew pale, and began to tremble. It was some moments before she found voice to speak.

"You are a noble man, Stephen, the noblest God ever made, I am sure. But I shall not attempt to excuse my treatment of you. Think the worst you can of me, it will no more than equal the truth. In failing of my love, you lose nothing that was worth the winning. Remember that and be comforted. Don't try to think kindly of me, don't forgive me the wrong I have done you. For my part, though, I shall always pray, as I do now, that God will bless you!"

She hid her face, walking rapidly away before he could say one word in reply. There was a look in her eyes she did not wish him to see, since it was by no means such an expression as maidens are wont to dismiss rejected lovers with.

Stephen stood as if transfixed, and saw her go gliding up the hard beach-road, never turning to the right hand nor the left. Presently she passed in at a little wicket, and joined a party of friends on the Point House piazza. Stephen sighed, not hopelessly, but sadly.

"She did not tell me that she loves any other man," he thought. "Nothing but my poverty stands in the way—and her pride, God bless her! Greater obstacles have been overcome before now. I'll not be a coward, and give up the game. Giles Lyman the millionaire is the only opponent with whom I need measure steel, and hereafter it shall be 'neck or nothing' between us two. What if he does come of a blood that boasts an antiquity older than the waters of the Raritan? What if he outshines the Rothschilds, the Hopes and the Barings, even, in the amount of his riches? It is a great pity if sympathetic youth and the shrewdness that may be exercised by a moderately close man, are not more than a match for even greater advantages than even these. Besides—"

He broke off shortly, and went pacing up and down upon the beach; whistling softly to himself; and when Stephen whistled, it always meant something. It was not a musical treat with which he often favored him-

self. But, when any knotty question came up to vex him, he had fallen into the habit of whistling the difficulty clear; when any misfortune or impending disaster threatened, he never sat down and folded his arms in supineness of grief, but—whistled! When fortune frowned, and the world looked dreary, he never thought of pistols, arsenic, or the pitiful waters of the bay, but straightway fell to whistling. And there was always a deal of magic in that whistle of Stephen Trevor's. Somehow it read riddles and righted wrongs; it chased away trouble and helped to set him right in the world; it lightened his heart and gave him courage.

The sun went down sullen and wrathful, and purple shadows darkened along the shores of the bay. The dabbled streaks of flame died slowly from the sky, and two or three stars peeped bashfully out. But Stephen still paced and whistled, and whistled and paced, until the moon coming up, threw his shadow on the glistening sands—a great, ungainly shape outlined in blackness and following his footsteps like a pursuing demon.

Then he walked steadily up the road towards the hotel, listening to better music than his own insignificant whistle, as he drew nearer; for the sweet treble of violins, the blare of horns, and the silver kisses of cymbals were trailing their melody on the silent air. Windows were open, and fair forms circled past.

Stephen looked in on the festive scene. A great room flooded with light and sweet sounds, and shimmering with color, Maud Meredith at the further end walking with Giles Lyman—a cool, perfect figure in all that crowd of heated and giddy dancers, floating on the waves of music in tireless and illimitable circles that seemed the expressed poetry of motion—a figure to catch the eye and keep it, like some pleasant and restful vision.

Presently the two whirled nearer in the progress of the dance, and finally swept out of it altogether, pausing beside an open window, only a fluted pillar and a yard or two of space between them and Stephen. The pulses of the latter throbbed a trifle more rapidly, but he sturdily stood his ground.

There was a little gay talk between Maud and Mr. Lyman, and then Stephen, listening with clenched teeth, heard him ask her company in a quiet sail on the bay for the following morning—a sail that would only include

themselves and a man to assist in managing the boat.

"I am proud of my skill on the water," he urged, "and vain enough to wish to display it. What do you think of such an excursion, Miss Meredith? Will you trust yourself in my care?"

She was about to plead some excuse, but Stephen jealously fearing a contrary decision, and really afraid for Maud's safety, turned sharply about until he was facing the two, of a sudden, when he crowned his folly by making an imperative gesture for her to decline the invitation. She caught his eye, and colored resentfully. Her decision was instantly made.

"I will go with you, Mr. Lyman," she said, placidly; "you will find me ready at any hour that you may be pleased to name."

The millionaire was profuse in his thanks. Stephen fell back discomfited, and without having uttered a word. He was sensitive enough to be wounded by this rebuff, but not sufficiently wise to profit by it, for seeing Maud on one of the balconies a half hour later, he plucked up courage to approach her.

"I do not expect you will brook my interference, Miss Meredith," he began, in a low, unsteady tone of voice, "but I have come as a friend to entreat you to remain at home to-morrow. Giles Lyman is a bundle of conceit, and knows no more of the management of a boat than Mrs. Belmont's poodle. If you venture upon the bay with him, you do so at the peril of your life."

Maud's lip curled.

"Really, Mr. Trevor, you take an unaccountable interest in my movements," she said, curtly. "But your warning comes too late, since I have already pledged my word. Moreover, it is barely possible that you underestimate Mr. Lyman's skill."

With that, she turned impatiently away, and Stephen was compelled to smother his mortification for the second time.

"The dear angel," he thought; "she will not listen to a word of warning, and I must contrive to be of service to her in some other way. Thank the Lord that, though my good friend Lyman is an ignoramus on the water (and not much better on the land), I know every crook and turn of the bay, and am perfectly at home with a few heaving planks beneath my feet, nor necessitated to ask any odds of the best old salt of them all. My head may be too thick for money-making, but I can steer a craft equal to any crack pilot

on the Jersey shore. "Thank the Lord, I say, for now it will be something wonderful if Maud Meredith does not have two lovers instead of one, on board the boat that sails to-morrow!"

And Stephen marched out upon the veranda and set to whistling again—this time a low, soft melody into which the music of the orchestra, sweeping out in savage, exultant marches, or trailing a minor sweetness in birdlike waltzes, brought no clangor of discord.

II.

It was half past eleven when Maud and Mr. Lyman stood on the beach, the next morning, fully equipped for their expedition. The boat was moored near at hand, as neat and staunch a little craft as one need care to see, ready to spread its white wings over the water.

Overhead, a lurid sun looked down from a brazen sky, the result, perhaps, of the blood-dabbled horizon of the preceding night. A low moan seemed to be coming from afar out at sea, as if the million dead were astir on that day of all others, and were crying out against the pitiless waves that had engulfed them. The tide was low down, but at the water's edge crisp bits of yellow foam flecked the amber sands, and the bay was all of a wrinkle with the salt sea breeze that was blowing.

The boatman, a bronzed, wrinkled old man, stood in the bow of the boat, shading a pair of keen, restless eyes with one hand, and peering first into the sultry sky, then over the moaning water, as if he scented danger. He turned as Mr. Lyman and Maud took their places in the boat, barely glancing at the two.

"The signs be mighty bad, mister," he said, in a cracked, husky voice, now keeping his eyes turned resolutely away. "The sky's uncanny, and don't you hear that moan comin' out o' the heart o' the sea? Them's bad omens for this shore, mister."

"Humph!" muttered Lyman, angrily. "Peace, babbler! There's not a cloud in the sky, as you can see for yourself. Cease your old woman's croakings and set the sails." Then he turned to Maud.

"I assure you there is not the slightest danger, Miss Meredith. Shall we go on?"

She, in turn, swept both sky and water with an intent eye. To her unaccustomed

vision, they only revealed a certain, subtle power, latent as the fire in steel. Moreover, she could not forget that Stephen Trevor had urged her not to depart on this excursion. A pink flush crept into either cheek.

"We will go," she said.

The boatman did not stir, but still stood leaning against the side, stroking his grizzled beard. Lyman's brow darkened. He stepped nearer, looking at him more curiously than he had done before.

"You are not the person of whom I hired the boat," he exclaimed, in surprise and anger. "Why has a change been made?"

The man gave his tarpaulin an extra twitch that pulled it lower over his eyes than ever.

"That were Ben, my mate, mister," he answered. "He were took with one o' his spells again, and I had to fill his place. Poor Ben. He's been troubled with 'em nigh on to ten year, now."

Lyman looked dark again. "What do I care? Look alive, man, or Ben will have a second successor. Do you comprehend?"

"Ay, ay, sir."

This time the sailor went about his business. The boat was launched, the sail set, and her prow "cleaved the waters like a thing of life."

Maud was charmed. Her eyes sparkled, and the color glowed redder upon her cheeks, as she sat in the stern, watching the receding shore. She was in a gay, tantalizing mood, though she must have known that Mr. Lyman had planned this sail on purpose to make a formal declaration. The sly witch was as full of chatter as some provoking magpie, and had a bit of pleasantry on hand whenever he attempted to speak of love.

"This is the happiest hour of my life," he ejaculated, as they swept into the open sea.

"Delightful," murmured Maud, sweetly.

"I wish it might last forever."

"Dear me, how can you say that?" returned the little hypocrite with charming unconsciousness. "It is very nice for a few hours; but then I should soon tire of it. There would be no flirting, no dressing for parties, and all that; ugh!"

She shrugged her shoulders, petulantly, and Giles found himself compelled to reserve his fine speeches for more fitting occasion.

The sailor kept his distance, busy with the management of the boat. But, no matter how closely he might be occupied, he could find time for frequent though covert glances directed towards the two sitting in the stern

Perhaps the sight of the lovers brought up some old memories. No life is so poor and barren that it may not have some romance to sweeten it. Every Bottom is pretty sure, sooner or later, to find a Titania to stroke his amiable ears.

And still the sea continued its moan, flashing up powdery jets of foam, here and there, for tears. The boatman listened uneasily.

"Hadrn't we better shorten sail and put about, mister?" he asked, finally. "It will be blowin' big guns afore long, if I can read the signs aright."

Lyman had made no progress towards accomplishing the object of the expedition, and was cross in consequence.

"Keep straight ahead," he said shortly.

They bore down in the direction of Hurdle Island, coming to anchor under its precipitous shore. A new whim had seized upon Maud. She knew there was fishing tackle on board, and wished to try her skill.

"It would be delightful to take a whale or a shark home with us," she said, laughingly; "the Point House belles would be so horrified."

The boatman was standing near by, at the time.

"There be land sharks as well as water sharks, miss," he muttered, in his huskiest tone of voice.

Maud started, and turned, with bated breath; but the boatman became unaccountably busy with the sails all at once, and kept his back towards her.

The fishing was profitless work—nobody caught anything. But the sun glared hotter and hotter while they were at it, and began to creep down the western sky. The sea sent up its moaning like a troubled human heart. The water was streaked with purple lines, and yellow bits of foam lay here and there.

Lyman and Maud were chatting at their old rapid rate, and the boatman, reclining against the side of the little cabin, was lazily listening. Suddenly he started to his feet with wonderful alacrity for a person of his apparent years, and began pulling in the anchor hand over hand. Lyman observed the movement.

"What is it, my man?" he asked.

For answer, the boatman pointed westward, just above the beetling cliffs under which they were anchored. Of a sudden the sun seemed to have gone out in a wan, ghastly glare. Below, an awful calm had fallen, treacherous as death. Up the sky strode jagged masses of clouds frowning black, and throwing out

shadowy arms here and there, as if feeling for their prey. The silence momentarily grew more intense and intolerable—more ominous. The three felt the change, even as they looked.

"Good God!" cried Lyman, aghast, "there's a squall right upon us!"

He started to his feet, some of the color gone from his face. Maud gave a second glance into the sky. She remained perfectly quiet a moment, and then crossed over to where the boatman stood, working with might and main to clear the vessel.

"Is there any danger?" she asked, in a low, intent tone.

"Don't know, miss. Might as well hope for the best, though," said he, briefly, not so much as looking at her.

Lyman swaggered towards them.

"Pooh," he muttered, trying to speak assuringly, "there's nothing to frighten one, though I *was* somewhat startled at first. It's only a little bluster that may not reach us at all."

The sailor blurted out some expression that was not exactly scriptural, but kept his face averted, and still worked away as if for dear life. The black horror swept toward them like a winged demon; the heaven frowned above, and the rocky isle frowned beside them, the two threatening all sorts of evils.

Out of the dead calm, like the breath of an angel, swept a capful of wind. The boatman shook loose the linen, which, catching the breeze, spread out like the wings of a bird, snow-white, then taking the helm, the vessel stood shivering one instant, and then glided through the waves at right angles to the island, its movements graceful as those of a high-born dame.

A heavy roar of thunder rolled along the sky.

"Are you sure we are pursuing the wiser course?" asked Lyman, grown anxious again. "Would it not be better to return to our old anchorage?"

"We'll be on the rocks soon enough as it is, I reckon," growled the boatman, doggedly. "They'd suck us in like a whirlpool."

The wind came in puffs, but freshened every minute, sometimes bending the masts before it. Lyman crawled about on deck in a state bordering upon frenzy now that he was in real peril. Maud stood watching him, her face pale, her lips apart. Only once, however, did she utter one word that sounded like a reproach.

"I thought you were a great sailor, Mr. Lyman," she then remarked. "Otherwise, I should not have trusted myself in your care; but you are really more helpless than am I."

Then she sat down clinging to whatever object she could lay hands on. The miserable man crouched near, looking at her appealingly every now and then, but too thoroughly frightened to try to excuse his conduct.

The boat left behind it a long shining streak flecked with foam. The mad demon in the sky came tearing and bellowing after, howling out its fury, at last. The mast shivered and creaked, and the keel was lifted half out of sky, the water. Maud clasped her hands.

"Is there no hope?" she asked, despairingly.

Lyman covered his eyes shudderingly, not daring to look into the black depths of the "None. We are lost," he groaned.

The boatman heard the answer, and began to growl again, this time more savagely than ever.

"Stop your mouth, you lubber," he roared, giving over all show of respect for the pitiable coward. "If it wasn't for the miss, yonder, I should say the sooner we went to Davy Jones's locker the better. There would be two rogues the less among the sinners."

Lyman was silent, too dispirited to resent such words. A handful of spray, snow-white, came dashing into the boat, drenching him to the skin. He crawled nearer the cabin, making a wry face, and spitting the brine from his mouth.

The boatman, working hard at the helm, heard the splash of the water. He looked grave, but broke into a shrill whistle, finally, that was audible above the roar of the wind. Maud heard it and glanced at him sharply, then hid her face. When she raised it again, it wore a calmer and braver look.

Silence had fallen between the three. The boatman broke it, calling out sharply:

"Lyman, a word with you!"

The poor fellow crawled slowly from where he lay.

"You love life, and wish to save it, I reckon, mister," said the boatman. "I know these waters like a book, and there's one chance for us, though it's a risk to run. Three miles ahead, on the north side of Girdle Island is a narrow inlet that will float us. The high shores shut off the wind, and if we can double the point we're safe enough. There'll be an awful sea runnin', but we must take our chance."

"Anything to get rid of this cursed squall," growled Lyman, not knowing what else to say.

"Take the tiller then. Keep her straight ahead, and stand firm, for your life."

Lyman dropped into his place. His face was white, and his hands shook. He seemed vainly trying to summon courage for the duty before him.

The tiller began to swing round. Two white, shapely hands pushed suddenly past his, and grasped it firmly and steadily. Maud Meredith stood there, her eyes kindling, her cheeks aflame.

"This is my part," she said, resolutely. "I have a life to save, and cannot stand by without doing something to help myself. See, I am calmer than you, Giles, and stronger. Go away!"

The boatman looked at her keenly. He saw a true, trusty face and great shadowy eyes wide open with an appealing look. He knew that she was to be relied on.

"Get up, Lyman," he said, in the tone he would have used in speaking to a dog.

Maud gave him a grateful look.

"Thank you, Stephen Trevor," she said.

Lyman, crouching near, regarded the two steadily a moment, and then muttered an oath, startled out of his fear, even.

"A thousand furies!" he yelled. "Is it really you, Trevor? Why are you masquerading in this style?"

Stephen answered nothing; but tender-hearted Maud turned swiftly.

"It was for my sake," she said, softly, "though God knows I never deserved such goodness."

She kept fast hold of the tiller, beginning to cry quietly. Stephen longed to take her into his great, brawny arms, but the black cloud in the sky was swooping lower, eager to shut them in, and the time had come for action. It came driving onward with an awful, articulate roar, like the shrieking of myriad fiends, or the howling of lost souls. A gust of fiercer wind than any that had preceded bent the masts like reeds. Stephen sprang forward, thinking in some way to relieve the strain.

At that moment a terrible darkness swept over them; one loud continuous roar filled the air, more awful than anything they had, as yet, experienced; blinding flashes of lightning leaped hot from the very heart of the blackness to fall hissing into the water. An instant later, something crashed sharply

above their heads; one half the mast dropped short over the bows, dragging the heavy sail into the water.

The boat began to swing. When the first stunned sensation was past, Stephen sprang for the tiller. Maud was not there—she was nowhere to be seen on the deck!

"God of mercy!" he cried, wringing his hands. Then speech and strength failed him.

The rain fell about him in torrents, but the darkness lifted a little, and he saw a few tangled locks of hair floating among the sails over the side of the boat. Somehow, the canvas must have been twisted about Maud by the wind, and so had dragged her with it into the sea.

Lyman lay like a log on the deck. Stephen caught him roughly by the shoulder and dragged him to the tiller. The strength of a dozen men seemed to be in him.

"Keep it firm, this time, or I'll throttle you," he roared, foaming with rage.

Lyman was pale as the dead, but something in the man's eye compelled obedience. There might be hope of escape from the warring elements, but a man who spoke and looked like that would show no mercy.

Stephen knotted a rope about his waist, and leaped into the boiling water that was rendered all the more appalling by the debris of the broken and dismantled mast, strips of ragged canvas, and ropes all in a snarl that filled it. Salt spray dashed blindingly over him, and stopped his breath, at times, but he heroically worked his way onward to where Maud's inanimate form was tangled in the wreck, when he commenced cutting and slashing away with his pocket-knife, and soon had her free. Even then the sea tugged frantically at the two, as if reluctant to give up its prey, but Stephen succeeded in reaching the boat again, bearing the unconscious girl clasped tightly in his arms.

He dropped weakly on the deck, shedding some very childish tears, careless now of the din of the tempest, or the fierce glare of the lightning that seemed to be cutting the air like a knife. Death would not have been a very hard portion, since she he loved must share it with him, if he continued to hold her clasped like that.

He left her once, to cut loose the dragging sail; then went back again. While he sat chafing her cold hands and sheltering her head on his breast, Lyman, from his place at the tiller, watched the two in a dazed, bewildered way, as if not quite sure whether they were earthly like himself, or whether the storm-fiend had let loose these phantoms to mock him.

Presently the wind fell into silence again, and overhead the sky opened into clear, pure depths of promise. The storm swept bellowing onward as rapidly as it had arisen, and by-and-by hung curtain-like in the far horizon. The sun came out, a great, burning ball in the western heaven, and tipped the foam-capped waves with fire.

The boat was little else than a sparless wreck. The surf, rolling solemnly inward in long, low breakers bore it steadily landward, where there was only the danger of drifting it on a sunken rock, or of stranding it on some rocky beach. But no such destiny awaited its human freight, for presently a stanch little boat shot out of the entrance to the bay, and bore gallantly down to the rescue.

It was at this moment, when the coming boat was only a mere speck upon the water, that Maud heaved a gasping sigh, and slowly awoke from that sleep of unconsciousness. She found strong arms about her—arms that would never weary of their burden.

"Steve," she whispered, softly.

He stooped and kissed her. She held him there, putting her lips close to his ear.

"Steve," she said, "there is something I longed to say to you when we both stood face to face with the danger that is passed. I expected to die, but I was glad—really glad—to think that we were sure of sharing the same fate, whatever that might be. And, O Steve, I did so long to tell you what a grand, brave man I thought you for risking your life, as I know you have, for such a silly chit of a girl as I am."

She clung to him, crying quietly. He held her close, his heart too full for words. He had brought her out of the jaws of death, even, and the gift of the life he had saved was, assuredly, the only return she could make.

OUTGROWN.

BY MARIE OLIVER.

"MAY I go over the children's ward? I wish to adopt a little girl; partly to amuse me, and partly to wait upon me, as I am something of an invalid. She must be very pretty, for I can't endure ugly children, and I want her to have light curling hair, for I positively adore curls," said the rich Mrs. Saville, as she stood before the iron gate of the orphan asylum one snowy morning in winter, her silken robes gathered closely about her to shut out the cold, and her dainty frame shivering in spite of its fur raiment.

The matron, answering her impatient summons, bowed respectfully as she admitted her.

"See the children, did you say? Certainly. Will you please step this way, for we have several very pretty ones. About what age do you prefer?"

"Somewhere about eight or nine. I don't care if she is a trifle older than that, only she must be handsome, for I can't bear ugly children."

Mrs. Saville threw herself into one of the neat but plain armchairs scattered about the reception-room as the matron ushered her in, at the same time drawing her costly garments about her with a smothered exclamation of disgust, as if the very carpet could or would in some way injure them.

"I am in no hurry," she said to the awed matron. "My coachman will wait. But remember, the child must be handsome, else I will not take her; for as she will inherit my name, she must have something to recommend her."

And just then the lady, catching sight of the long though somewhat old-fashioned mirror at the further end of the apartment, began a rapid arrangement of her laces, which, owing to her brisk walk through the close corridors, had become somewhat rumpled.

The puzzled matron went out into the adjoining room, where the various little ones were assembled, engaged with their studies, hurriedly, and yet noiselessly, seizing upon the child nearest her with so fierce a grasp as to cause her to cry aloud.

This outburst, however, was quickly

hushed. A slight shake and a "There! there! keep still!" were sufficient. A stillness prevailed over all. Some twenty little ones were selected and marched into the large sleeping apartment common to all.

Then the task of dressing commenced. The swish of the sponges in water, the dipping of brushes, the occasional smothered "You hurt!" from the children, were the only sounds heard, mingled with the matron's quick voice, as she ordered her assistants.

"Mary, you will find Ida's frock in that drawer. Sarah, here is a bit of blue ribbon to tie Harry's hair back with. Blue is more becoming to her than red. Put that on Isabel."

But after a while the labor of dressing was over. Then there was only a hurried shaking back of freshly curled hair and a brushing of dresses. For every child in the room knew that sometime she would leave that dusty asylum for another home, and that she must be prepared to go with whomsoever would take her.

So, after a few moments, the matron threw open the door of the reception-room, and they filed in; just twenty of the fairest little girls in the asylum; and if Mrs. Saville had any heart, it must have gone forth then, as blue eyes and black, gray and brown, eagerly sought her handsome but haughty face.

Yet children are keen observers; and so, before she had spoken, more than one had drawn back, as if something had taught them they could expect no mother-love from that quarter. Wealth might be showered upon them, comforts and luxuries also, but love never!

So they fell back, clinging to each other, all the while steadily refusing to meet the severe rebuking gaze of the attendants.

Mrs. Saville never rose from the chair where she had first thrown herself. She only raised her eyeglass, and looked through it at the row of blushing faces before her, the jewels on her fingers almost blinding the eyes now shyly regarding her.

"There," she said, at last, "is one who will just suit me. That little fairy thing

dressed in gray, with a blue ribbon in her hair. Bring her here to me. I will take her immediately. Never mind packing her clothes; they will not, of course, do for her in her new home. But what is her name? Why, how strangely she acts! Stand still, child, and let me look at you! Why, you are a perfect little tiger!" And the lady angrily rescued her torn laces from the little one's restless plunge. "Do you always behave so? That bit of trimming cost me ten dollars a yard, and it is all but ruined. I am afraid you are a terrible child."

The matron knelt down quickly to replace with a pin the injured article; then she got up slowly, as if to apologize for the little girl's behaviour.

"I am very sorry that this should have happened, my lady; but Harry is generally good. She is easily governed, only, if she is to be taken by you, I must tell you that she has a sister, a few years older, and that they were placed here with the desire that we would not separate them. We have promised we would not. So, as you do not care for two, I fear she would not suit you. Hadn't you better look a trifle further? Here are many pretty ones; besides, I fear Harry would not go with you unless her sister went too."

"Not go with me!" cried the lady, starting from her chair in astonishment. "Pray, what is she here for then? To have things all her own way? Not at all; I want her, and I will have her. Her temper just suits me, after all. Her beauty is dazzling! So show me the other one. If she is as lovely, I will take her also, for I will have Harry!"

The matron silently pointed her out. She was not one of the chosen twenty. She had only quietly stolen in on hearing the voice of her little sister raised in angry cries at the lady's harsh shake, given when the flounce was injured; and when Mrs. Saville contrasted the pinched face and dark eyes beside Harry's bright beauty, she raised both hands with a slight shudder.

"Mercy! what a fright! What is its name?"

"Wealthy Herrick."

"Wealthy? Goodness! what a name! Pray, what is she wealthy in? Not in good looks, certainly," she added, laughing at her own pun. "And the little one. Has she just such a title?"

"No, madam. Her right name is Hattie,

but among the children she is commonly called Harry. It is only a passing fancy of theirs."

"Only a passing fancy? I should think it was! It is truly shocking! She must be called Grace or Lily, Maud or Eva, instead of 'Harry!' That is a boy's name. But come here, Harry. I want to talk with you. I have a very handsome house and lovely clothes awaiting some little girl; and now if you will come and live with me, you shall have them, and a great many more beautiful things? Will you?"

A resolute smile crept over the little face. The hand imprisoned in that of the lady's was pulled hastily away. The rosebud mouth shut tightly over the even pearly teeth.

"No," she said, "I won't stir a step. If Wealthy can't go, then I won't."

Mrs. Saville laughed joyously.

"Capital!" she cried. "What a temper! How I shall enjoy crushing it! And now remember, Harry, if you do not mind me in everything, punishment shall surely follow. But if you won't go without your sister, I will take you both. Wealthy will do nicely for your dressing-maid, and when once settled, beyond that, there will be no intimacy between you."

So she rose to go. The little girls' hoods were fastened on, a few kisses bestowed, and, preceded by their new owner, they went out to the grand sleigh in waiting, silently and shyly.

"I think," said the matron, humbly, as the tall footman assisted his lady to get in, and tossed the children like so many toys after her, "that you will find Wealthy to be an uncommon child. She seems to have outgrown most of the girls in her thoughts and feelings."

Mrs. Saville looked down contemptuously.

"Humph! as far as I can see, she has outgrown nothing but her clothes; while as for educating her—why, she is to be a servant for my adopted daughter! That is all. Didn't you understand me? I have taken Harry for my own, but Wealthy will be nothing to me." And the haughty woman stopped suddenly, for something in the timid pale face beside her checked the remaining words trembling upon her tongue, and she could not give them utterance.

Then, too, there was a world of pleading in the sad dark eyes, as if their owner had

caught glimpses of another world beyond; and because she knew not what would happen to her before she reached it, a shadow had fallen upon her heart, and lay in the depths of her wonderful eyes.

Then there was something strange about her. When she moved it seemed as if her inner sight was viewing something impossible for others to see; and when she spoke her voice betrayed some hidden awe, as if she lived in and loved a world of her own—an atmosphere unknown to her associates.

So when the cruel words, "Wealthy will be nothing to me," fell upon her ear, she looked up into the fair countenance above her, and gave a little sigh, as if she had expected nothing more and never should; while Harry accepted the robe which John threw to her as nonchalantly as if she had been accustomed to the same elegance all her life.

Mrs. Saville tucked it about her kindly.

"We will soon make a beauty of you," she said. "But hereafter you will be called Florence Louise Saville, for you are now my adopted daughter; and with your new name, I wish all thoughts of your old surroundings dropped. Do you understand?"

Yes, Harry understood, and very willingly promised to forget her past life. Indeed, with the luxuries before her, she had no wish to remember anything but them. For she was now Miss Florence! She was to have beautiful clothes; have servants to wait upon her; ride in a carriage, and have all the toys she craved. So she curled herself up on the spacious seat proudly, and waited until she was set down with Wealthy before the steps of her new home. Then came the change.

Wealthy grew accustomed to seeing everything lovely showered upon Harry, and she herself go without. There was a tiny chamber, elegantly furnished, leading from Mrs. Saville's, its carpet rivalling nature's bouquets of roses, and its walls and curtains the soft blue sky. There were tender furs and pretty dresses, ribbons and feathers, delicate slippers and ermine cloaks, books and flowers, toys and pets for Harry, while Wealthy received only the cast-off garments of servants, and many a night cried herself to sleep in her little cold attic. Still she said nothing, and after a while grew used to seeing her little sister dressed in laces and velvets, with

curling her beautiful hair, and hushing her to sleep each night within the elegantly-carved cradle-bed.

The servants said it was a shame; that Wealthy, with proper care bestowed upon her, would be as handsome as Miss Florence, and that she was a sight better. But Mrs. Saville would not listen; she only praised Harry and scolded Wealthy, till the former became spoiled, and the latter almost heart-broken.

Then Clara, the parlor-girl, took her part, together with Bessie the chamber-maid, and both declared that when Master Robert got home, things would be different.

This Master Robert was Lady Saville's only child, and she a widow, who, since the completion of his sixteenth year, had been abroad with his uncle finishing his education; and during that time, having been out from his mother's influence, he had imbibed the sound doctrines of his uncle, and had grown into an honest tender-hearted man of twenty-one, who would, in two years more, return to his mother's home to reign there as master.

A picture of him, taken at the time he left home, hung in the big drawing-room, and Wealthy, at one time, while dusting in the hall, had, through the half-open door, caught glimpses of the pretty brown-eyed boy; but Harry was more bold, and talked quite roundly of the time when she would be his bride, and take possession of the old house with him. For Mrs. Saville had said so, and Mrs. Saville's word was law wherever she went.

But the two years passed at length. Then the house was one chaos of confusion, for the master was coming home. The drawing-rooms were thrown open, cards of invitation were issued, tables groaned with their weight of silver, and the gifts of rare conservatories graced the elegant halls, while, dressed in a costly blue silk, with diamonds in her hair, proud girlish Harry lingered in the music-room, idly drumming the hymn of welcome with which she was to greet the lord and master.

As for Wealthy, she kept out of the way as well as she could; her neat but plain calico painfully contrasted with the silken garments of Lady Saville, so she tried to hide herself as much as possible. But after the grand ball had taken place and the elegant breakfast was pronounced ready, she stole into the grand dining-room in her own

shy way, as if she fairly dreaded meeting the handsome son of her stern-hearted mistress.

Harry had not arisen. She had already begun the role of a young lady, so, as her lessons could wait until she was ready to attend to them, she had kept her room, and, within the spacious depths of the oven, a delicate repast stood awaiting the appearance of this pampered child of fashion, while at one end of the table sat Mrs. Saville, and just opposite her her only son, for whose sake the previous festivities had been given. He looked up as the young orphan entered, and a faintly inquiring look passed over his face.

"Mother," he said, "who is this young person? A friend, or only a—?"

Mrs. Saville interrupted him with a majestic wave of the hand, at the same time turning to Wealthy as she pointed to the door.

"She is only my waiting-maid, Robert, and Harry's assistant. Wealthy, you may retire."

So the young girl went out silently, and the moment her footsteps died away in the hall, the generous master broke out quickly.

"Only a waiting-maid, did you say? Why, mother, I tell you that she has more pluck in her little finger than your favorite has in her whole body. Bah, this is nonsense! Why hasn't she been sent to school, and clothed like other girls? If my money has been appropriated to rig up yonder pink-faced clut, why not to instruct this Wealthy, with the glorious light of coming glory shining in her eyes?"

Mrs. Saville held up her hands in astonishment.

"Robert, Robert, is this the teaching you have received from your uncle?" she cried, the jewelled fingers holding the massive silver fork trembling violently. "How dare you question the propriety or the impropriety of your mother's movements?"

"I have the best right in the world, namely, because you are my mother," returned the young man, leaning back from the table with a very decided expression of countenance. "Besides, as I have before stated, Wealthy has more sense in her little finger than Florence has in her whole body. I recognize her genius, and I dare say that in mental culture she has, even

now, outgrown the useless little mortal above us. Why, mother, your treatment of this frail girl is absurd. I am also surprised at your clothing Florence, or Harry, as she is named, in the manner you do. And now Wealthy Herrick must be educated. She has got it in her, and it must be brought out; so, whatever folly you pursue with Harry, I shall, in the future, make a sacrifice for Wealthy. She is bound to you, I understand, until she is twenty-one. She is now fifteen. Very well. During that time I shall share the honors of Harry equally with her, and when her freedom day comes, she shall go or stay, just as she pleases. But, my dear mother, this decision need not part you and I. I will still be the most devoted of sons, only hereafter Wealthy Herrick's place as a waiting-maid will be vacant."

In vain did Mrs. Saville protest. Robert was firm, and that very day a change came to Wealthy Herrick. From the gloomy attic she was removed to a luxurious chamber adjoining Harry's own. Dresses costly and tasty were fitted to her. Laces rare and expensive became hers. Masters were commanded to teach her all her yearnings required; and at length, after one year of hard study, she was removed with Harry to Mrs. Hill's Academy for Young Ladies.

There her face lost its pinched look. Her cheeks took a fairer fullness, her eyes grew bright and happy, her splendid figure rounded out into a mature womanhood, while her movements became graceful, and her tastes quiet yet forcible. Her talents were many, but that of music was the chief one, and, as nature had gifted her with a rare voice, Robert had spared neither time nor money to indulge her desire, while whatever he heaped upon Wealthy Mrs. Saville followed suit with Harry.

So matters went on in this way until the school life of the two girls was over; but, just as Mrs. Saville was looking forward to the coming out of Harry as a reward for her patient waiting, a fever stepped across the threshold of the stately mansion, and death touched the fair cheek of the proud beauty. The light faded out from the bright eye, the lids drooped wearily, the hands lay upon the still bosom quietly, the merry voice grew hushed. Up stairs in the little chamber rich dresses lay unheeded, costly jewels became useless, and, bowed down with a mighty grief, Wealthy

put from her the haughty face of the only idol she had ever known.

After the funeral Mrs. Saville clothed herself in the deepest of mourning robes, and shut herself in her chamber, having conceived the greatest possible dislike for Wealthy, as if she in some way had been the means of robbing her of her treasure, and interfering with her plans, forgetful that hers was but a small loss compared to that of the lonely heart left behind. Not that Harry had loved Wealthy. On the contrary, she had often forgotten her, and at times ill-treated her, for she was so wrapped up in her own beauty and wishes; but she had been her only living relative, and Wealthy had loved her, and now sorrowed long for her.

But the keen trouble did not end here. The fever was not yet ready to take its flight. Mrs. Saville became the next moaning victim. Servants fled in fear; help was nowhere at hand. And then, in her true womanhood, went Wealthy Herrick into the chamber of suffering. Her hands smoothed the hot pillows, her fingers bathed the heated brow, her voice soothed the fretful complainings, and her calm eye kept watch over all until the plague passed, the house again became opened, and Mrs. Saville, for the first time in her life, kissed Wealthy Herrick and blessed her.

After that the manly true-hearted Robert sought this true woman as his wife; asked her to take him just as he was, and make

him as he should be. So she accepted him, finding at last her life's blessing to be centered in his love and his heart.

Children came to cheer them; glad young voices were heard in the halls which once rang with the glad tones of the girlish Harry; tender faces gleamed out from the ivied windows of the old mansion, and at last, just when the life work seemed all complete, the hands grew weary and the tired feet faltering; the soul of the true earnest woman passed up yonder.

The blow came heavily to Robert Saville. With his children about his knees long he sat beside his silent wife, musing upon that unseen world to which she had gone, and vainly trying to understand the mysteries of which she had always had a dim conception. But a cloud obscured his vision. All about him lay scattered traces of her life work. His children wore the tiny robes she had wrought for them, her needle lay in the little apron she had been last engaged upon, and in her private drawer the last pages of a new song, finished like the life of its composer, while close beside her easy-chair her slippers stood, no longer needed, for those feet were never to grow weary again. The tender friend, the true wife, the loving mother and the clinging companion had left them, and having outgrown those earthly garments and become tired of labor, she had exchanged them all for those glories between which and our eyes God has kindly drawn a veil.

PAPA DORLAN'S DECISION.

BY LOTTIE BROWN.

"I suppose she will marry some time or other, and perhaps, after all, she will be as well off to marry now, as to wait half a dozen years."

Old Mr. Dorlan turned the letter over in his hand, and looked at the pretty blonde in the easy-chair opposite. It would be hard to give her up, but with either of these two men, he felt that she would be happy.

West Harley wrote:

"MR. DORLAN:—For many months I have felt a deep interest in your daughter, and am bold enough to hope that my affection is in a degree returned. I am not a rich man, but I have a fair business, and strength and energy, and my wife would have a certainty of the love and respect of an honest man. With your permission, I would be pleased to call upon her.

Respectfully yours,

"WEST HARLEY."

Clarence Hillsdale wrote:

DEAR SIR:—I am deeply and sincerely in love with your daughter. I propose to make her my wife, with your consent. My name, position and means are well known to you. I await your reply.

Yours,

"CLARENCE HILLSDALE."

The first was a faithful counterpart of himself in his younger days. There were a few improvements, such as a little better prospect, a few more dollars than he possessed at twenty-five, but the principle, the straightforward honesty and strength of purpose were there.

The other was the very man he had had in

his mind for months. Everybody knew the solidity and worth of the great banking-house of the Hillsdale Brothers. Everybody knew Clarence, the younger, to be a thorough man of business and a gentleman. He drove his handsome bays with grace and ease, but never with recklessness. He gave a supper now and then, when champagne and Madeira flowed like water; but he went to his chamber with a clear eye and steady hand, and without even the faintest breath of tobacco perfuming his elegant clothes. Men found him always at his post, with his fair face flushed with health, and not a trace of dissipation wrinkling a single feature.

It was hard to choose between them. Perhaps Ruth could choose. So he spoke:

"Ruthie, come here!"

She came, with her wellbred, graceful step, and leaned over his chair.

"Well, papa?"

"Read these."

He gave her the letters and she read them carefully over. A blush stole up, mantling brow and cheek when she concluded West Harley's letter, and at the end of Hillsdale's a delighted exclamation escaped her.

"You cannot marry both. Which shall it be?"

"Papa, I don't know. I used to really love West, until Clarence came; but now—well, Clarence is rich and stylish, and yet, West is—good and true. You shall decide."

"And you will abide by my decision?"

"With all my heart, papa."

Ruthie went back to her easy-chair, and gave the matter up entirely to papa's superior

judgment, and he, with quite as much if not a degree or so more anxiety than he had felt at his own matrimonial settling, sat back and reflected.

Honesty and truth were jewels seldom found, but with money and power on the other side of the scale he was a little afraid they would sink into nothingness.

"Well, I will wait. Someway I shall receive the truth of the matter, and know into whose hand to place the happiness of my little Ruth."

"Do you know young Harley?" he asked a neighbor.

"Yes. Bless you, who don't? He is one of our solid young men."

"Do you know Hillsdale?"

"O yes. He's another. One of the best fellows in the city."

So there it was. Both were perfection. Ruth liked both, and so did he. He could not choose between them.

These letters arrived on the second of December. On the fourth each gentleman received a brief note from Mr. Dorlan, with a few pleasant but unsatisfactory lines. He would consider, he said, and give them his answer, if they would wait with patience.

On the twenty-fourth there was a fair at the church. It was magnificent, from its foundation, and its object was to decorate with greater splendor the already splendid edifice.

Fair young girls, with confectionery at ten dollars per bite, and dainty useless knick-knacks priced at five times their real value, besieged every visitor, and he was a hard-hearted creature who could resist the touch of the white hands, and pleading glances from soft eyes, and sweet entreaties of "do buy this, you know you need it. Please do?"

Mr. Dorlan was there, and his little Ruth the proprietor of a table well filled with worsted nonsense, silken cushions, bead-work, smoking-caps and slippers, and many a close-fisted fellow laid a bill upon her table and carried away a trinket, as satisfied as though he had got double his money's worth.

Clarence Hillsdale was there, and so was West Harley, and Papa Dorlan whispered:

"Ruthie, you'll never have a better chance. study these lovers of yours."

And Ruth studied.

They did not stay away a moment longer than etiquette demanded. As soon as they could frame an excuse, they sauntered toward her table. Of course they were not jealous,

for each other's motives were unknown, and they met as wellbred men do, and after offering their salutations to Ruth fell into an easy conversation.

"These are pretty articles," said Clarence, taking up a pair of velvet slippers. "Did you make them, Miss Dorlan?"

"Yes. I have but those two pair left; wout you take a pair? They must be exactly your size."

"Yes. I believe they are. What do you expect in return?"

"My price as you see is ten dollars, but in a case like this, we trust more to the generosity of the purchaser."

She said this with a charming smile, and he placed a little roll of bills in her hand.

"You will take the remaining pair, will you not, Mr. Harley?" she asked, while doing up the bundle.

"Yes;" and West Harley tendered his offering.

Some one else came up just then, and they turned away, leaving Ruth for a moment with her father.

"O papa!"

"What is it?"

"See what a generous soul Clarence Hillsdale has. Five hundred dollars for a pair of slippers! And West—O how mean!"

"How much did he give you?"

"Ten dollars only."

"Well, that was your price, and a pretty steep one, too, considering the fact that they did not cost more than one half that sum."

"I know, but think how great the contrast between their gifts. Why I'd given more, after what was said, if I had been obliged to pawn my boots."

"West Harley is more sensible," was papa's short reply.

They went away, each bearing a pair of slippers wrought by her dear little fingers, and each within his heart hope enough to make him happy, and Ruth lost her chance to study her two lovers.

Long before the close of the evening Papa Dorlan got sleepy, and started for home. Ruth was in good hands, and he was too tired to stay there and stand the heavy fire, and constant demands upon his purse and patience, so he found his overcoat and furs in the ante-room, and presently was trudging along towards his comfortable mansion.

A lithe figure passed him at the end of the block, and under the light from the street lamp, he recognized West Harley. He was

in a hurry, and with a little curiosity Papa Dorlan hurried too and kept quite near. All at once he disappeared. Papa Dorlan rubbed his eyes. Where in the world did he go? Ah! There was a grocery store on the corner. Possibly he might have gone in there. A few steps more, and Papa Dorlan was peering in at the glass door.

Yes, he was there, and so the curiosity box outside watched and waited.

It was for a long while, for this strange young man was superintending the tying up of mysterious parcels, and finally the rolling out of a barrel of flour.

"What in the world is the fellow buying groceries for? He don't keep house!" thought the watcher at the door, as West took out his pocket-book and paid a bill on the counter.

"These articles must be delivered to-night," he said, as he opened the door.

"All right, sir!"

Well, Papa Dorlan looked after the tall figure as it sped out of sight, and began to think it a decidedly mysterious affair.

"I may get myself into trouble, but I'm bound to solve this matter;" and straightway he walked into the store.

"These articles are to be delivered to-night."

"Yes sir."

"Where?"

"At No. 28 M—— St."

"Could you give me a ride around there?"

"O yes." The answer came promptly, but the grocer's eyes looked wonderingly at the finely-dressed gentleman.

It was a long ride and by no means a pleasant one, for it ran through narrow streets and alleys, and ended in a low but clean little court.

"Here you are, sir, at No. 28. Halloo there! Mrs. Martin."

The door of No. 28 swung open, and a woman pale and poorly clad appeared.

"Here's a load of goods for you."

"For me? There must be a mistake."

"Not a bit of it. Take a parcel or two, and I'll run in with the rest."

Papa Dorlan, eager to see the whole, caught up a bundle, and ran up stairs behind the wondering woman and the grocer.

It was a poor little room, as neat as wax, half filled with freshly ironed clothes, and its proprietress, a pale, meek-faced woman, bearing the marks of poverty upon every lineament. Two children from their supper

of bread and milk, looked at the stranger, and hailed the apples, as the grocer rolled them into a basket, with a shout of delight.

"Did you buy these, sir?" asked the woman, turning to Papa Dorlan.

"No ma'am, I did not. But I know who did. Do you know West Harley?"

"Yes, Heaven bless him! I do his washing, sir. Did he send these?"

"Yes, he did."

"Is everything here? A barrel of flour, five pounds of sugar, one of tea, two of coffee, four of butter, a bag of salt, two bushels of potatoes, a bushel of apples, crackers, raisins, and a bag of cakes! There, all here in the book. Is it all right?"

"Yes sir, they are all here."

"Come, sir, are you going to ride back with me?"

"Yes. Wait a moment. Here, my good woman, is a little to help you. I must not be behind Harley. God bless him! may he have a family's washing to pay for before another Christmas." And Papa Dorlan hurried out and again mounted the grocer's wagon.

It was very late when Ruth arrived in the carriage of a friend, at her father's door; but late as was the hour, she found her respected parent in the library.

"Why, papa! Are you awake?"

"Yes, and I've something to tell you. Do you remember that you promised to abide by my decision in choosing between your two admirers, Harley and Hillsdale?"

"Yes, papa."

"Well I have decided. Marry West Harley."

"Why, Papa Dorlan."

"You know you love him best. If you don't, you will when you hear my story."

Ruth folded her hands over papa's knee and listened while he related the incident of West's generosity. When he concluded she said:

"Papa, send for him. I am sure I love him best."

Next day the two gentlemen received their replies

West Harley folded his, and leaned back from his desk with a happy smile illuminating his handsome face.

Clarence Hillsdale coolly twisted his, and lighted his cigar with it, and went out for a smoke.

PEARL BRAXTON.

Hoffmann, Carl

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PEARL BRAXTON.

BY CARL HOFFMANN.

PEARL BRAXTON was undeniably and exceedingly pretty. Even her intimate friends of her own sex, and somehow she managed to have a good many, were obliged to acknowledge the fact. A *petite* figure, delicate hands and loyal feet. An exquisitely oval face dimpling into smiles at the slightest provocation. Eyes with softness, and depth, and a sparkle of amethyst lights, and golden-brown hair that disposed itself in uncontrollable short curls all over her head. It was a marvellously pleasing picture that she made, when one evening she sat on the broad stoop that ran on one side her father's house, under the waving curtains of the grapevines, and with one hand supporting her chin, watched the changing colors of the western sky fade into gray, and suffered her thoughts to rove as they would in unending and de-

licious reverie. Pearl was young and happy, and the dreams of youth were hers by right. What wonder then, that in fancy she roved on and on from one scene of gayety to another, herself always the heroine of the event, and always reaching forward towards the presence of that mysterious other self, that somewhere in the obscure future awaited her coming, or perchance pressed eagerly forward to meet her. So lost was Pearl in this labyrinth of dreams that the steps of a horse's feet on the loose gravel of the driveway failed to arouse her attention, and it was not until the horse stretched its head and neck forward and gave a rude pull at the vines with his teeth, that she became aware of its approach. She sprang up with a startled cry, to encounter the half-amused, half-apologetic gaze of the horse's rider.

"I fear I have frightened you," said the stranger, gravely. "Pray excuse me; you were so completely hidden in the shade that I did not even suspect your presence until the rudeness of my horse brought you to light as suddenly as if you had been the guardian fairy of the vines. Perhaps you can give me the direction of the nearest village."

"It is yonder," said Pearl, "where you see the two spires so near together; the road takes you directly there without any decided turn."

"What is the distance?" inquired the stranger.

"Something less than two miles, I imagine."

"Is there a good inn there?"

"Passable," said Pearl, wondering a little at the English expression.

The stranger suddenly bent forward in the saddle and examined one of the stirrups.

"I am afraid there is something wrong here," he said. "May I trouble you to hold the bridle while I examine the strap?"

Pearl stretched out her hand as if to comply with the request, but withdrew it almost instantly.

"I will ask my father to come out," said she. "I think he could assist you better than I."

"On no account!" said the stranger, hastily; "it was not so bad as I thought it—there—I—think—it is all right now," and he resettled himself in the saddle and tightened the reins in his hand as if with the intention of turning away, then as from an after thought, he asked:

"There is no nearer way to the village, no short cut across the fields—"

"No," said Pearl, decisively; then suddenly afflicted with a suspicion that he was questioning her needlessly for the purpose of prolonging the interview, she added mischievously, "There is one way, there is a footpath across the fields; you might—you could—leave your horse here, and walk. I think you would reach the village as soon, perhaps." And then Pearl laughed, a silvery musical laugh, that ran out of her mouth like the bubbling ripple of a brook.

The stranger flushed to the broad rim of his hat, but could not refrain from joining in the laugh, at his own expense though it was.

Attracted by the sound of voices, Mr. Braxton presented himself at this point of the interview. He eyed the horse and its

rider with undisguised curiosity and unequivocal admiration.

"Stranger 'n these parts, I take it," he said.

"Yes, the country is new to me," was the courteous reply.

"Travellin' agent for anything?"

"No," said the stranger, bending his head to conceal a smile, "I am travelling principally for pleasure."

"O!"

"I stopped here to ask the way to the nearest village, and the young lady very kindly gave me a good deal of useful information." And here he bowed profoundly to Pearl, lifting his hat completely off his head, and thereby displaying his broad forehead and handsome hair.

"O!" said Mr. Braxton, again. "Calculate to remain long 'n the neighborhood?"

"Perhaps—*cela depend*."

"Waal, 'f yer dew, give us a call."

"I shall hope to do myself that honor." And finding no excuse for further delay, the stranger turned his horse's head in good earnest, and rode slowly away.

"A very well lookin' young man," was Mr. Braxton's comment to Pearl.

"Do you think so?" said Pearl, demurely. And ran up stairs to her own little chamber, where, before retiring, she stood a long time by the window looking out at the stars, and when at last she slept, a soft pleased smile rested upon her lips.

As for the stranger, he reached the inn in proper season, did justice to a hearty supper, looked to the accommodations for his horse, and then sat for a long time enjoying the soft air and the moonlight, and the society of his cigar. No shadow of thought disturbed the serenity of his countenance as he continued to smoke, but it is safe to conclude that he did think of something, for as he rose from his chair to go into the house, and flung away the burnt end of his cigar, he said to himself, but aloud and quite distinctly:

"I'll do it."

The village of Cranston was one of those odd little New England towns that seem to have no definite right to exist, but like mushrooms spring into life because the locality is favorable. Naturally, farming was the occupation of its inhabitants, and Mr. Braxton owned as large and as good a farm, and was as well to do as any of his neighbors. He was a church-going man, and

every Sabbath when the weather did not positively forbid, he drove his wife and Pearl a distance of two miles in the open wagon to church. Pearl could sing a little, and being able to sing a little, was of course a member of the church choir. And the gossips of the town, who were always making matches, assigned her to the handsome sun-browned young tenor who led and trained the choir. It was a very natural thing to do, and it was equally natural that the handsome young tenor should accept the position without a murmur. As for Pearl, when one of her friends, after much mysterious hinting, which she *would* not understand, confided the rumor to her in point-blank language, she only laughed, and like a prudent young woman said nothing.

Very small events could put Cranston into a fever of excitement, and no little interest was aroused when it became known that a strange gentleman had engaged board for some weeks at the hotel, that he was accompanied only by a servant, that his ostensible business was collecting geological specimens, and that his name was Brice Edgerly. But what he had done or been before his appearance there, no one could discover. The minister and the schoolmaster called upon him, but although courteously received and charmingly entertained, they confessed themselves completely baffled in all attempts to unravel the mystery of who and what he actually might be.

Mr. Edgerly did not delay to avail himself of Mr. Braxton's invitation to give him a call. Not many evenings after his first appearance he presented himself again, spent a short evening and talked to Mr. and Mrs. Braxton with his lips, and to Pearl, who sat by demure and silent, with his eyes. But before many such evenings had passed the lips followed suit with the eyes. Poor little Pearl! it was hardly fair; there was no escape for her, she was so innocent, she believed so wholly in herself, that she could not do otherwise than believe in others. She had not a single weapon of defence with which to protect herself from the fascination to which she was so mercilessly subjected. The stranger talked so easily, and without approaching her seemed so constantly to surround her with his presence. He described so charmingly the places and people he had seen, and told such pretty stories of the German valleys and waterfalls. But more than all else he delighted in describing the wild beautiful

scenery of Ireland, and in repeating the legends of its favorite saints. One evening he described an old baronial residence so vividly, Pearl felt she could almost see the dark, lofty, irregular building, with its battlemented towers overlooking the wide stretch of country, and the tall arched gateways from beneath which gay hunting-parties of ladies and gentlemen rode forth. Seeing Pearl's eyes dilate, and deepen, and brighten as he went on, he told of the merry-makings, and feasting, and grand celebrations that took place when the heir to the grand estates came of age.

"And how would you have liked to be there, Miss Pearl?" he asked, abruptly, turning the full blaze of his eyes upon her.

"O!" said Pearl, with a long sigh more expressive than words.

Edgerly laughed.

"You would not do to ride with a hunting-party, Miss Pearl," he said, a little teasingly, "you are not courageous enough; why, you did not even dare to hold my horse's bridle when I asked you."

"Yes, I did dare!" said Pearl, angrily. "You know I did, you—"

"It isn't good taste to blacken the character of another, because you can't defend your own," interrupted Edgerly, wickedly. And Pearl could not do otherwise than laugh at his impudence.

"But you should really learn to ride. Come, confess you have never had courage to mount a horse," persisted Edgerly.

"She can't confess to no such thing as that," interrupted Mr. Braxton. "She's rode old Sally to plough more'n once in a way—"

"I am afraid my horse would hardly take kindly to the furrows," returned Edgerly, smiling; "but perhaps Miss Pearl will try him on terra firma. How is it, Mr. Braxton, have I your consent to become her riding-master while I remain in town?"

"If Pearly wants to," assented Mr. Braxton, somewhat one-sidedly.

And Pearly did want to, and very prettily she looked dressed out in an old black alpaca skirt of her mother's, and a very bad piece of work she made of riding at her first attempt; as the lessons went on, however, there was decided improvement, but it required very persevering persuasion on the part of the teacher to induce the pupil to attempt to leap even the lowest hedge that could be found in the neighborhood; but at

last even that was accomplished, and Pearl was made happy by the information that she was quite qualified to ride after the hounds.

"You should see my sisters ride," said Edgerly.

"I wish I could," answered Pearl.

"That is not impossible," returned her companion.

But if he intended to say it was not impossible for her to *wish* to see his sisters, or that it was not impossible for her to see them, Pearl could not quite decide.

"I am glad you have become so expert," continued Edgerly, "I shall feel quite sure you can take care of yourself when I'm gone."

"Gone!" said Pearl.

It was only one word, but it revealed so much, so much that even Pearl herself had not guessed before.

A bright sharp smile blazed in Edgerly's eyes, and played about his mouth. Pearl saw the smile, she saw that it was pleased, but alas! she also saw that it was triumphant. In that moment Pearl ceased to be a child; all the woman in her nature was aroused, and asserted itself. When she answered Edgerly's next apparently careless remark, her voice was so perfectly controlled, her manner so natural, that he was not only surprised, but chagrined; if there had only been a shade too much of indifference, or ever so faint an affectation of gayety, it would have been so much better. But alas! his composure disappeared as hers asserted itself, and Pearl had the wicked pleasure of seeing him look at last utterly confused. It was the same in the evening when he presented himself to say "good-by." Pearl was maliciously and willfully content that he should say good-by, and the words he had intended to utter remained unspoken.

Brice Edgerly and his servant departed, Pearl Braxton discontinued her equestrian exercises, and the town of Cranston wondered. After a week it could endure its suspense no longer. A neighbor was incited by various small stratagems to take her work and spend a social afternoon with Mrs. Braxton.

She eyed Pearl severely. Pearl bore the scrutiny with unflinching fortitude.

"Lost yer beau, haint yer, Pearl," remarked the neighbor, with great delicacy. "Better have took what you could hev, when you could git it."

Pearl gave her a surprised look, and answered never a word.

Apparently, Pearl was not pining; she went back easily into the life she had led before Brice Edgerly had come to disturb the even tenor of her way. She was constant at church, and joined readily in the merry-makings of her young companions. She even ran, without wincing, the gauntlet of tongues at the sewing-meetings. Seeing Pearl in good health and spirits, the handsome young tenor took heart, and renewed his attentions.

"May I walk home with you?" he asked, after he had detained the choir till the latest possible moment, for the pleasure of looking at Pearl's pretty face while she sang. And Pearl had said "Yes." But when, as he turned to leave her at her father's door, he asked, "May I ride with you, Pearl?" from sheer kindness to him, she said "No."

He did not urge his request, but even in the moonlight Pearl could see the deadly pallor that overspread his face. "Poor fellow!" she thought, "if his heart aches as mine does how I pity him."

After that there was a change in Pearl. She went out less, and grew pale and quiet, but she was brave still.

One evening late in October Pearl sat in her accustomed seat on the stoop. There was no shadow of vines to conceal her, only a few yellow leaves still clung with sombre persistency to the brown twisted branches of the vines. Pearl leaned her head against the trellis and looked up wistfully at the numberless stars that shone and twinkled in the clear dark depths of the night air. Presently there was a sound of footsteps upon the loose gravel of the drive, and once more Brice Edgerly presented himself at the steps. Pearl sprang up with a quick glad cry. Edgerly took both her willing hands in his, and drew her, unresisting, into his arms. There was no need of words.

So it happened that those of Pearl's friends who had said "Poor Pearl, it'll be a good thing for her, she needed taking down," were put to sudden and terrible confusion, and their chagrin was by no means lessened when it transpired that Brice Edgerly was heir to an Irish earldom, and that one day their "poor dear Pearl" would become a countess.

PRINCESS ETHEL.

BY MISS CAMILLA WILLIAN.

PROBABLY there never was any woman on earth more beautiful than the Princess Ethel. She was so lovely that every one who saw her turned to look again; and when they looked they smiled, just as you always do when you see anything that delights you. The picture of her which you see here is very pretty, but by no means does her justice. She had heaps of dark hair, which would curl most gracefully and was silky-fine and glossy. She had large blue eyes, with a tender and cheerful light in



THE PRINCESS ETHEL.

them, and very long lashes. Her shape was perfect, as you can see, her hands and arms were lovely, and she was as white as new milk. You will perceive that she wears earrings, and has her hair done high, as is the style now. Well, it was she who set the fashion; and the Empress of France and the other ladies have only just a little while ago found it out. As quick as they saw that picture, they went and did up their hair just like it, and put on just such earrings.

This princess had the misfortune to lose her father, at which she was very unhappy; for not only was he a very good father, of whom she was fond, but he was a warrior, and protected his kingdom and his daughter from the wicked folks who lived about. When he died,

Ethel did not know what to do. She could not lead armies, as he had done; and two of her greatest generals were dead. If she had only known where her Uncle Madoc lived, it would not have been so bad. But when her father became king, on the death of his father, Madoc, his twin-brother, had gone off to live in a strange land, as they supposed.

"I go," he said, "because, since I and my brother are twins, I have as much right to be king as he, and my presence might give him trouble. I am happier, with only my wife and son, than I could be on a throne. Besides, I look so much like the king that I might be mistaken for him, and that would be very annoying to all."

"O, if I only knew where Uncle Madoc was," said the princess, weeping bitterly; "he would come and take care of my kingdom for me. But here I am helpless, with foes all around, and my armies frightened to death. If I were a man, I would be braver; but it is a miserable thing to be a woman."

While she wept, a servant came to the door of her chamber, and, bowing lowly, said:

"Madam, the King of Colchis is at the palace gate, and wishes to see your highness."

"I don't want to see him," answered the princess. "He is my enemy, and an ugly, hideous old man besides."

"Madam," said the chamberlain, bowing lowly again, "he has ten thousand men with him."

"O!" exclaimed the princess, starting up, and turning a little paler (she couldn't be much paler than she already was); "that alters the case. Invite him in, and say that I will come as soon as I shall have wiped away the tears that I am shedding for my father."

Then she called her maids, and they began to dress her. And while they dressed her they talked. One of them said:

"O princess, there is no escape for you. You will have to marry him."

"Marry who?" asked the princess, staring through her tears.

"The King of Colchis," said the maid.

"Does not your highness see that he has come to offer himself to you?"

At that the princess pulled down her hair, and put off her purple mantle, and threw away her rings and bracelets.

"Make me look as ugly as you can," she said. "Put on mourning. I will never marry that wretch, never!"

So they put away all her ornaments, and dressed her in mourning, and let her hair hang. But, instead of being ugly, she was then more beautiful than ever.

"What shall I do?" she cried, in despair. "Why have I not a snub nose, and black teeth, and blue lips, and red hair? Make haste all of you! Get things to make me ugly. Cut off my hair, Mignon, black my teeth, Agate, do something, all of you!"

But even while she spoke, she heard the king stamping about the hall below, asking in a fierce voice why she didn't come, and saying that he would himself go up stairs after her.

"Alas! madam, you must go without delay," said her ladies. "It is vain to try to make you look ugly. You grow more beautiful every moment."

"Let us make haste, then," cried the princess, and hurried down stairs, trailing her black robes and her dark hair about her, her face looking out from all that shade like the evening star out of twilight skies. At least, so thought a young warrior who stood just behind the king.

The king himself seemed pleased, for he smiled a horrible smile that made his grizzled old face look ten times more hateful than before, and going to the princess, he took her by the hand, and kissed her before she could help herself.

"My dear," he said, in a great, harsh voice which he tried in vain to make soft, "I have come to ask your hand, and to marry you right away. That will unite our two kingdoms, which lie side by side, and give you some one to take the lead of your armies, and protect you. And, besides," he added, chuckling her under the chin, "it will give me a pretty wife."

"O no!" cried the princess, shrinking back, and blushing with anger; at which she grew still more beautiful, so that the young warrior behind the king, who had never once removed his eyes from her, thought that now she was the morning star.

"And why not?" demanded the king, frowning terribly, so that the ladies all

covered their faces with their hands, and Ethel nearly fainted with terror.

"Because," she stammered, "you are a good deal older than I am, and I am afraid you would die first, and that would be a great grief to me."

The king laughed so that the palace shook, then seized the princess by the arm and said:

"You are a glib liar, and an artful minx besides. I have seen you casting glances at Prince Falchion here," turning to scowl at the handsome warrior behind him; "and I dare say he has been admiring you. But he is a mere adventurer, without a kingdom, or a piece of gold even, unless I give it to him. You had better both of you be careful. Now, madam, will you marry me?"

"No, never!" cried Ethel.

The king gave her arm an awful squeeze that made her cry out, then turned to the young prince:

"Prince," he said, fiercely, "take this lady to my great forest on the borders, and set her to tending goats. She shall stay there in solitude, have only berries, and nuts, and water to live on, and sleep on the bare earth, till she consents to be my wife. See that you obey my orders, and that you do not touch her yourself, or so much as smile upon her. If you do, your head will come off in less than no time. My dwarf shall follow and watch you, and see that you behave."

Then the king gave the princess a push out of the door, and, looking about on the trembling courtiers, he said, in a voice of thunder:

"I am king here. Obey me, and do not dare attempt to see, or to help that impudent wretch."

Meantime Ethel was following the prince to the far-away forest, and the dwarf was close on her heels, watching. But she was not very unhappy.

"It is not so bad to follow him," she thought, looking at his fine, graceful form and stately bearing. She marked, too, that he took very little steps, so as not to tire her.

It was near night when they reached the forest where the princess was to live all alone and tend goats, and there the prince stopped and looked at her, with his face full of love and pity. Fortunately, just at that moment the dwarf stubbed his toe, and fell down, so there was chance for a word.

"Find my Uncle Madoc," whispered the princess.

"I come from him. He is not far off," whispered the prince in return. "In two days you shall be free."

By this time the dwarf was up, rubbing his nose and watching; and there was no way but for the prince to go. The princess looked after him as long as she could see him; and once, when the dwarf stumbled in running (for now the prince took long steps), he looked back and smiled at the princess, and she smiled at him.

"How he must love me," she thought, "when he thus risks his head to give me a smile!"

Two days and nights are a long time to



UNCLE MADOC.

spend in a lonely forest, with only goats for company, and berries and water for food; and if it had not been for hope the princess's heart would have broken. Moreover, the hateful dwarf came at morning and evening, and asked her if she had consented yet to marry the old king, and when she said "No," he told her he had orders to hang her the next time.

"What shall I do if the prince or my uncle does not come?" she thought in terror, on the third morning. "It is almost time for the dwarf, and he will hang me, surely!"

As she spoke, there was a crackling in the bushes, and the frightful dwarf made his appearance with a large rope in his hand. He

fixed it to a tree branch, got the noose all ready, then said to the princess:

"Will you marry the king to-day?"

"No!" she cried out; "I will die first!"

At that the dwarf, who was very strong, and had immense arms, caught at her to put her head in the noose. But as he did so, two arms reached around the trunk of the tree, one of them pushing the dwarf's head into the noose, and the other pulling at the end of the rope, and all done so quickly and neatly that the little wretch was hanged entirely before he knew it.

Ethel cried out joyfully, and stretched her hands to the prince, who stood smiling by her. But it was not he who owned the hands that had delivered her. Their owner appeared instantly, a tall, rough-looking man, with long hair, a slouched hat and curled beard. He was rather rough, but not ugly looking, and Ethel cried out again when she saw him, for she knew he was her Uncle Madoc.

"Let us fly!" she cried. "The king will be after us as soon as he misses his dwarf."

Uncle Madoc shrugged up his shoulders, and leaned to give the hanging wretch a good pinch, to make sure that he was quite dead. Then he said quietly:

"I'm rather too old and heavy to fly, little niece; and we are in no sort of danger. Our armies, Prince Falchion's and mine, have gone on to destroy the King of Colchis, and get every sign of him out of sight before we go to the palace. I gave orders, too, for preparations to be made for a marriage."

At that the princess blushed most beautifully, and her uncle caught her up in his arms, and laughed, and carried her through the wood toward her palace. The Prince Falchion walked behind, and while Madoc sang and muttered to himself, he whispered to the princess:

"I came from afar to see you," he said, "and when I met the King of Colchis, he made a captive of me. Your uncle sent me as soon as he heard of his brother's death. But, though I have helped to save you, I am miserable; for he is going to marry you to some wealthy prince, while I have only a heart and a hand to offer you."

The princess said nothing; but she reached out her hand and plucked a branch from a flowering shrub, a beautiful branch full of fragrant flowers and fruit.

"What is that for?" asked the prince.

"To give to my husband," she answered, dropping her eyes.



THE BEAUTIFUL FLOWERING BRANCH.

He said nothing, but walked on sorrowfully, till they reached the palace, where everything was in splendid order, and the King of Colchis and his warriors all hanged and out of sight.

Such rejoicings never were seen; and when the princess, magnificently dressed, came down to be married, the air was full of music, and huzzas.

"Who is to be your highness's husband?" asked the archbishop, seeing the princess stand alone, with her ladies in a cluster behind her.

She glanced around the circle to where stood Prince Falchion, looking pale and despairing, and smiling sweetly on him, she held out to him the flowering branch she had plucked in the wood.

Instantly his face became radiant, and he ran to throw himself at her feet.

"If you want to marry me, prince," she said, smilingly, "you will have to stand beside me."

So they were married, and lived happy ever after. And Uncle Madoc was general of all the armies.

PUSS ALLYN.

BY KATE PUTNAM.

PLUMP, dimpled and rosy, with bright blue eyes, and red lips over which smiles rippled sunnily—such was Puss Allyn. Of course, this was not her real name, which, infinitely more sounding, was Isabella. But while yet in early infancy, it became evident, that, for so kittenish a little creature, such a long and stately name was simply a ridiculous impossibility; and, as none of its diminutives happened to suit the household taste, the child became Puss, first by some chance, and afterwards by common consent. The wisdom of this title she justified in later years, by developing into as frisky and frolicsome a lassie as ever was petted. Lovers were hers “by the bushel,” to use a rural simile, Mr. Edward Marston, however, having somehow managed to distance the rest of the competitors, and place himself a long way in the foreground. But although he had conquered his rivals, he had by no means conquered the common object of their emulation, who, to his eager yet despairing gaze, seemed to recede in proportion as he advanced. Briefly, the case stood thus—Edward—more generally called Ned—Marston, was extremely desirous of proposing the momentous question to Puss, who, whether from a mischievous fondness for tormenting, or from a constitutional inability to keep quiet long enough to be wooed, was forever defeating his schemes. The intention of this veracious tale is to give some account of the consequent game of cross purposes.

Ned's farm was next to the Allyn place, where Ned was as frequent a visitor as his somewhat interrupted leisure would permit; for, clever and energetic, the young man was bent upon improving his estate to its utmost capability, to which laudable enterprise he devoted very much of his time. Yet his near neighborhood to the Allyn house enabled him to drop in there at various odd moments throughout the day; occasions which he often tried to turn to some account in the matter of his courtship. But here he was wonderfully unlucky, for no sooner would a word indicative of sentiment fall from his lips, than an interruption was sure to occur, brought about either

by Puss herself, or some malicious chance, which, doubtless, shared her secret counsels in some mysterious manner.

One beautiful afternoon, Ned came over, and walking in unceremoniously as usual, found Puss in a back porch, hulling strawberries, in company with Betsey Wilkins a spinster of uncertain age, who had been an assistant in the family for the last fifteen or twenty years.

“May I help you?” was Ned's salutation, as he saw how the two were engaged.

“Yes, if you will wash your hands three times, and bow to the east and west,” replied Puss. “You have no idea of the ceremonies Betsey and I are obliged to perform over our work.”

With all due gravity, the young man proceeded to obey her directions, after which he joined the busy hullers, only pausing to ask, “Shall I wear gloves?” at the same time drawing from his pocket a pair of those articles. Betsey Wilkins answered this query by grimly tossing the gloves to the other end of the porch; but the eyes of Puss, full of merry malice, showed that she was meditating some new mischief. The nature of this soon became evident.

“I am so glad you came in, Ned,” she said, when he had been at work about five minutes. “Now that Betsey has you to help her, I can be spared; and that's very nice, because I want to be getting ready for Emma Spooner's party, to-night. Good luck to you. Mind he doesn't eat more than he hulls, Betsey.” With which words, the witch was off.

Now Ned Marston had two reasons for feeling annoyed. One was, that he had come over that afternoon principally for the purpose of requesting Puss to attend with him this very party, to which, as her speech implied, she was going with another. (Truth to tell, although Ned did not know it, the young lady had that very day accepted the invitation of her cousin, out of pique because Ned had not asked her before; a thing which, under the circumstances, was hardly possible, as he had been absent from the village the whole of the previous day, having only just returned.)

His second cause of provocation lay in being willfully left by Puss in the absurd position of voluntary assistant to Betsey Wilkins; a situation which she very well knew he had not contemplated, and which, if witnessed, he was equally aware would expose him to no slight amount of ridicule. But as it happened, Ned Marston was one of those individuals not too common in the world, who cannot be rude to a woman, whatever her age or station, and, in addition to this, he was determined not to let Puss see that her mischievous device had succeeded in mortifying him, therefore he remained in his place, leisurely hulling, and tranquilly chatting, meantime, with Betsey, who, pleased at not being abandoned, unbent considerably from her usual dignity. The pan was a large one, and before they had succeeded in emptying it some one was heard to open the gate, and presently, drawn thither by the sound of voices, a young man made his appearance in the porch.

This person, both in dress and manner, was somewhat of an exquisite; too much so, indeed, to take the least notice of Betsey Wilkins, who bitterly resented the slight, considering herself, according to the country notions expressed in the country phraseology, "as good as anybody." This super-fine creature, however, deigned to bestow a rather supercilious salutation upon Ned, who met his eye squarely, in reply, never moving an inch from his place, and betraying annoyance only by a slight flush. That this heroic conduct may be the better appreciated, it should be stated that this same Wilmer Searle, cousin to Puss, was, of all others, the one whom he had dreaded to meet in his present condition, as well as the rival whom he feared, and who, he shrewdly suspected, had been beforehand with him in the matter of the invitation. Meantime, Mr. Searle had walked into the kitchen, where, engaged in skimming milk, he found his aunt, whom he thus addressed, with a slight drawl, which, being neither particularly instructive nor entertaining, is perhaps, as well omitted:

"Aunt Mary, your maiden—what is her name, Betsey?—seems to have turned her lover's devotion to some account. Must be quite convenient."

As the languid tones of her nephew reached her ear, good Mrs. Allyn dropped the skimmer and turned around in surprise.

Betsey's lover, indeed! That was a person whose acquaintance she had never made, during a daily intimacy of many years with the damsel in question, nor had even suspected his existence. Therefore did her voice have a startled cadence, as she exclaimed:

"Betsey! Who is with her? where are they?"

"In the porch, as I came in just now," drawled Wilmer, answering only the last question, as he sauntered away in search of Puss.

Mrs. Allyn picked up the skimmer, wiped her hands and moved toward the kitchen door. Now as this opened from the porch, the occupants of the latter could hear every word spoken within, as well as the movements of the good lady. For this reason, Ned was not taken by surprise at her coming, and he remained as quiet as Betsey herself, who, offended but dignified, worked on in grim silence. Mrs. Allyn opened the door, but, instead of the words which she had intended to speak, an involuntary laugh broke from her lips. And the scene was certainly a ludicrous one. Opposite Betsey, with her stiff grizzled side-curls, her preternaturally tall comb and nose of equal length, sat Ned Marston, his fingers deeply stained and an old apron tied about him. The huge pan rested upon their knees, while both hulled away with an immovable gravity and muteness, whose earnestness suggested that they were working for a wager, and was, in itself, irresistibly comic. At the sound of Mrs. Allyn's mirth, Ned looked up with a smile, although the color deepened in his handsome face, as, over her shoulder, he beheld the sneering face of Wilmer Searle and the laughing one of Puss, who, hearing the sound of her cousin's voice, had come down just in time for a peep.

"Why Ned, that's too bad!" said the elder lady. "Who set you to doing that? Here, let me take your place."

"No need," said he, resisting her attempt. "We've nearly finished. There are hardly a dozen left in the pan."

This was true, and in another minute they were deposited beside their fellows, leaving the dish empty, except for a mass of hulls.

"There," said Ned, rising and removing his apron, "if ever I want a recommendation for smartness, I shall come to Betsey

for a character. I hope you'll remember me when you eat 'em."

"O, you must stay and eat some yourself, Ned," said Mrs. Allyn. But this invitation, though warmly urged, the young man declined, and presently took his departure.

Now though I do not wish to insinuate anything against Puss, it does seem rather an odd coincidence that, having slipped away from her cousin, she should have happened to be leaning over the gate in the lane through which Ned Marston had to pass, on his way home. Yet it must have been pure accident, after all, for she started very naturally at his step. For the lack, probably, of something better to do, he stopped likewise, and leaned over the gate with her. The sun was in the west, and its low rays sent the tremulous shadows of the great elms slanting far across the green meadow-land, while an uncertain breeze shook from the ripening clover-clusters momentary whiffs of sweetness, that, while it lasted, made the surrounding region like a garden.

"What a lovely day!" cried Puss, enthusiastically, looking around. "The moon's nearly full to-night, you know, and if it doesn't grow cloudy, wont it be a nice night for the party?"

"Very," replied Ned. "You are going with your cousin, I suppose?"

"Yes. Will came over early this morning, to invite me. Very good of him, wasn't it?"

"Very lucky, at least, to be able to come when he wanted," answered Ned, smiling at the sudden extreme humility of word and tone, decidedly unlike her usual self. "I've been away from home ever since yesterday morning, but I came over this afternoon, to ask the same favor. Seems I was too late, though."

Puss did not half like the carelessness which she found, or fancied in his speech. He might be offended about the strawberries, she thought, and, at any rate, it would be well to prevent his growing too indifferent. So, with a view to re-establishing her power, she made her voice very low and soft, and looking shyly up in his face, said:

"Do you mind, Ned? Then I'm so sorry! If I'd had any idea of your asking me—"

There she stopped short, but Ned, quite overcome by this unprecedented sweetness, and scarce conscious of anything save the

preference for himself which her words had implied, broke in, eagerly:

"Would you really rather go with me, Puss? Would you—"

"Yes indeed," she interrupted, briskly, with an abrupt change of manner, "for your horse is a great deal faster than any my cousin can get. I do so love to drive fast! There's Will looking for me, so I must go back. Good-by."

With which pleasant last words she departed. Ned shut the gate and marched home, with bitter thoughts toward that "city cousin," who, meantime, as they were now beyond hearing, was being considerably snubbed by Puss, the treacherous creature, who had been all smiles to him in the presence of her other lover. This double injustice toward Mr. Wilmer Searle was certainly very hard.

Emma Spooner resided several miles from the village, but the prospect of a moonlight drive only formed an additional inducement, and her house was well filled. Ned Marston was so long in making his appearance, that serious doubts were entertained of his coming, especially by the fair hostess herself, who, report said, was not averse to his society. Wilmer Searle had taken advantage of this absence to circulate the strawberry story, with additions and improvements of his own, so when the young man did at last arrive, and alone, withal, a general clamor greeted him.

"Where's Miss Betsey, Ned?" shouted one.

"What's the price of strawberries when you hull 'em yourself?" asked another, while a third reproachful inquiry was made, as to how he could come off to a party to enjoy himself, leaving his lady-love to wash the dishes alone.

Ned—bless his good heart!—was not easily irritated, and received all these shafts of satire with a perfect composure which blunted their edge. It was not long before they returned to their own concerns, content to leave such indifferent game undisturbed. Ned was a special favorite with all the young people, and he was often called upon during the evening to share in their merry-making. Usually, he was ready enough to respond to these solicitations, but upon the present occasion, he seemed to prefer a quiet spectatorship to any active part in the festivities. As a guest, of course he must not be neglected by Miss

Emma, who exerted herself for his entertainment with a goodwill which I fear Puss did not properly appreciate. On the contrary, she mentally called her forward and disagreeable, yet with a generosity worthy of praise, since it was exercised toward one so distasteful to her, she did not rest until she had, by sundry well-timed hints, convinced her cousin Wilmer that it would be the height of incivility if he, the representative, as it were, of the city, should not devote himself to the amusement of his hostess. Flattered at being considered of such account, Mr. Searle sauntered leisurely toward the pretty Miss Emma, and taking a seat beside her, with ready assurance, soon contrived, despite her inclination, to engross the most of her attention. Perceiving this, Ned Marston rose and walked away, looking for something to occupy himself with. Most of the company were seated in groups, busy with games or conversation. Ned did not feel inclined to join any of these gay circles, but while he yet stood, uncertain, he saw Puss Allyn cross the room and disappear behind the deep curtains of a window. He hesitated a moment, then followed. The window was of that charming though old-fashioned style which contains a broad seat whereon two might nestle, completely hidden, at will, by the long and heavy drapery.

Puss received the young man very cordially, seeming entirely forgetful of the afternoon's *contretemps*.

"You see I am deserted," she observed, in a rather doleful tone. "Will has seen fit to devote himself to Emma Spconer. Mortifying, isn't it? but I should think *you* might feel a little jealous."

"*It*?" exclaimed Ned, with honest surprise; then, with an accent of bitterness, "What is it to me where Mr. Wilmer Searle chooses to bestow his attentions?"

"O, I don't know, I'm sure," replied Puss, with a sudden assumption of total lack of interest in the subject. "I only thought from what I heard some of them saying, that it couldn't be very pleasant to have a third person come in between you, just when you were enjoying yourselves so much."

"Whatever you heard, you know very well," began Ned, in the excitement of the

moment placing his foot upon the paw of a sleeping cat, which interrupted his speech and betrayed her presence, by a dismal mew, indicative of extreme discomfort. At this, a laughing face was thrust between the curtains, the owner whereof, having taken in the situation at a glance, exclaimed, roguishly:

"Why, Mr. Marston, how can you do so? Don't you know if you don't love the cat, you won't love your wife?"

With these words, the curtain dropped again, and the mischievous fourteen-year-old fled, rejoicing, to report to her mates the probable confusion which her sally had cast in the heart of Ned Marston, "doing his courting." Ned ~~met~~ the cat, which, with an air of injured innocence, had withdrawn to the further end of the recess, to attend to her wounded paw, and gently stroking her fur, said, with a tender earnestness which might have been considered disproportionate to the subject:

"Pretty Puss! dear Puss! I love Puss! indeed I love Puss!"

Now, since, during the whole of this affectionate address, he gazed, not at the brute, but at the human Puss, I fear that he was making a cat's-paw of the kitten. To judge by her blushes, Puss Allyn thought so, too, while even the cat seemed to harbor a dim suspicion of the kind, and angrily hissed and struggled until she had freed herself from these insincere attentions. Her escape, however, troubled the young man but little, for, encouraged by that deepening color, he was at last speaking out to such good purpose, that—no, no, it is not fair to betray secrets; but, at all events, when, on their homeward way, Wilmer Searle patronizingly carried into effect his previous design of offering himself to his pretty little *well-endowed* cousin, he received for answer a polite negative, for the reason of a—*previous engagement!* As may easily be imagined, despite the beautiful moonlight, the remainder of the excursion was not particularly pleasant; but for this Puss indemnified herself, by taking another drive on the next evening, when, although the moon was bright and the horse was fast, it was, after all, neither of these things that formed the principal attraction.